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Fifty Years' Foxhunting

WITH THE GRAFTON
AND OTHER
PACKS OF HOUNDS.



Grafton

J. M. K. ELLIOTT.

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FIFTY YEARS' FOX-HUNTING
WITH THE GRAFTON AND OTHER
PACKS OF HOUNDS.



GEORGE HENRY.
Fourth Duke of Grafton.

FIFTY YEARS' FOX-HUNTING

WITH THE GRAFTON AND OTHER PACKS
OF HOUNDS.

BY

JOHN MALSBUY KIRBY ELLIOTT.

EDITED BY HIS SON,

EDWARD KIRBY ELLIOTT.

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LONDON:

HORACE COX,
WINDSOR HOUSE, BREAM'S BUILDINGS, E.C.

1900.

LONDON :

PRINTED BY HORACE COX, WINDSOR HOUSE, BREAM'S BUILDINGS, E.C.

TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE GEORGE SHOLTO
DOUGLAS-PENNANT, BARON PENRHYN,

THIS BOOK IS,
BY HIS KIND PERMISSION, MOST RESPECTFULLY

Dedicated,
BY HIS OBEDIENT SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

MY LORD,

I feel that an attempt from me to write a book will somewhat surprise the public.

Whatever opinion may be formed of my production, I am sure it will be universally allowed that I am very fortunate in having permission to dedicate the book to your lordship.

Your lordship has done so much in support of the Grafton Hunt by taking the mastership for nine seasons; and, after relinquishing those duties, you have continued so liberally to support and help to carry on the sport of Fox-Hunting, with the aid, as Master, of the Honourable E. S. Douglas-Pennant, that I feel that no one will value the history of the Grafton Hunt, its noble Masters, good Huntsmen, and fine Packs of Hounds, for the last fifty years, more than your lordship.

Trusting that my efforts may meet with your approval,

I beg to subscribe myself,

Your lordship's obedient Servant.

J. M. K. ELLIOTT.

DELAMERE HOUSE, LEAMINGTON,

7th June, 1899.

PREFACE.

ONE can readily understand a young man, with a taste for fox-hunting, looking forward with the hope of having a good time of it, to the period when he shall be established as a fox-hunter. With an aged man who has had a full share of his favourite sport, the time arrives when he should be thankful for what he has received, and he naturally looks back and recalls the past events of his life. During my lengthened career I have met many of the best men of the day, and have enjoyed hunting with them to my heart's content.

A very large number of Masters of Hounds, Huntsmen, and their Packs have contributed to my gratification and pleasure; I feel greatly indebted to them personally, and the thought has long been in my mind that, if I were spared, I

should feel it a pleasing duty to record a word of tribute to those who have been taken from us, and of appreciation of those who are living.

Haunted by the thought of the feebleness of my attempt, I have done my best, hoping to take shelter under the account of splendid Sport I am able to place before my readers.

A second reason is that I am not aware of any trustworthy history of the Grafton Hunt being in existence. I feel that the country may be proud of a narrative, and I think that I am in possession of more knowledge of that which has passed during the last fifty years, than perhaps any living man; so I feel bound to write it.

Another reason which I must state, is, that we had for thirty years, in the country, a most skilful huntsman, who gave great satisfaction to his masters, in carrying out a most difficult office for so many years, and leaving a record of sport that—I may say with confidence—has never been exceeded. Frank Beers commenced in the year 1860 to whip-in to Lord Southampton, two days a week; and to his father, George Beers, also two days a week; and in 1862 he began hunting

for the Duke of Grafton, and was huntsman for twenty-eight seasons in the Country. Frank left a good diary, cleverly written ; I am the favoured person allowed to make use of it. I know of no more fitting manner of doing so than by making it a matter of history. I could not write my experiences without mentioning the neighbouring Hunts, wherein I, for so many years, enjoyed the friendship of, and sport with, many of their Masters.

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ERRATA.

Page 18, *for* lines 24 and 25 *read* "running into coverts, where fresh ones would appear; the hunted fox would then turn back; Adam was very clever at seeing such," &c.

Page 31, line 22, *after* "March," *insert* "1851."

Page 19, line 1, *for* "Durham" *read* "Denham."

Page 85, line 6, *for* "daughter" *read* "dam."

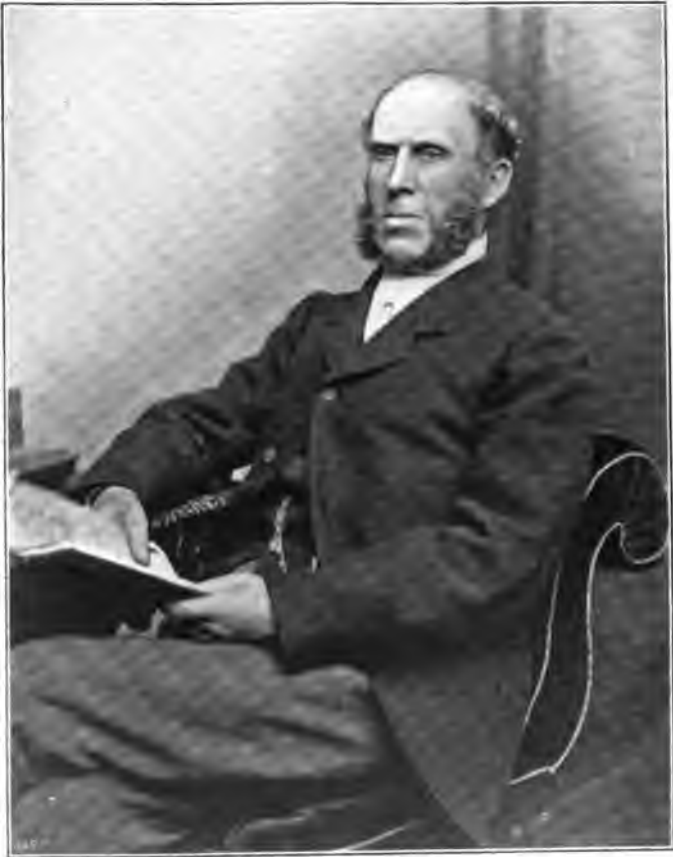
Page 204, line 24, *for* "in it" *read* "to it."

Page 230, line 12, *for* "Rothschild" *read* "de Rothschild."

Page 252, line 7, *for* "the Misses Higgins and Turvey" *read* "Miss Higgins of Turvey."

Page 252, line 14, *for* "J." *read* "G. Race."

Page 254, line 10, *for* "George Payn" *read* "Payne."



J. M. K. ELLIOTT.

CHAPTER I.

THE FOURTH DUKE OF GRAFTON, M.F.H., COLONEL GEORGE FITZROY.

BORN on the Grafton estate, at a very early age I was sent hunting by my mother on a pillow, in front of the head groom ; and, having persistently followed the Grafton Hounds for so many years, I may reasonably call myself a " Grafton " man.

The first Master of hounds my memory records was George Henry, fourth Duke of Grafton, of great renown on the turf, a most successful breeder of racehorses, as turf history tells us. His Grace won many races, and his great success upon the turf appears to have stimulated him to turn his attention to the improvement of hunters in the Grafton country. Having so fine a stud to select from, the Duke, in his great generosity, kept a proper selection of sires at Wakefield Lodge for the benefit of his farmers and friends. After a few years had passed, the Grafton country became

very famous for hunters, and in the early part of the century gentlemen and dealers flocked to it from all parts. Breeding had become so general that a good supply was kept up for a time, but the demand was so great, and such good prices were given, that the breeders made a great mistake; they were tempted by the high prices, and sold the mares which had bred the stock.

Pioneer was a sire of great fame; the horses from him were wonderful hunters, but bad hacks. The mares were exceedingly good. The farmers could not resist the pecuniary temptation, £150 and £200 apiece was freely given. The Duke was a great buyer himself, and recommended many to his friends. A letter written by the Duke in 1830, to one of his tenants, the original of which is in my possession, shows clearly how agreeably his Grace did business:—

The Duke of Grafton's compliments to Mr. Elliott, and has ridden his mare quite enough to satisfy him that she is worth his buying, on account of the ease of her motion and knowledge of her business.

As Lord James (who has gone hunting to-day) told the Duke of Grafton that the price of the mare was 150 guineas, he has taken her at that price, considering her to be perfectly sound as she seems to be.

Mr. Roper will have directions to pay Mr. Elliott for the mare when he meets him at Towcester on Tuesday next, or the Duke of Grafton can send a draught by the post to-morrow.

just as Mr. Elliott pleases; and will Mr. Elliott be so good as to send a line on this point by whoever he sends back with the pony, upon which the Duke has sent back Mr. Elliott's servant.

Wd. Lodge, $\frac{1}{2}$ past 2, Thursday.

If Mr. E. prefers taking a chesnut horse of the Duke of Grafton's, Norman, four years old, thoroughbred, he may have him at 100 guineas. But as this would be quite a matter of fancy or speculation on the part of Mr. E., he might ride the horse whenever he chooses, and for as long a time as he likes.

Wakefield Lodge, $\frac{1}{2}$ past 2, Thursday.

His Grace generally had the offer from his tenants of anything likely to suit him.

A farmer on the estate named Parish was a good rider, and was employed by his brother farmers to show the young horses when ready.

The Duke saw Parish riding a good-looking young Pioneer horse, and he said :

"Parish!"

"Yes, your Grace?"

"You don't bring that horse to show me."

"No, your Grace."

"Why not?"

"I don't think he would suit your Grace."

"What's the matter?"

"Well, your Grace, he has broken his knees."

"Oh dear! I am very sorry, Parish! How did it happen?"

"In a very extraordinary way; he was going down the road, he caught his toe and fell, and it was a 'fair fall'!"

The Duke, greatly amused, said it would not suit him; but he had never heard of a "fair fall" before.

The Duke took great pains with young horses, and was in the habit of taking out two at a time with some of his good riding grooms; if they showed good temper and fine horsemanship with a wayward horse the Duke always rewarded them on the spot. I must add that the succeeding dukes have done their best to provide sires of the best blood. The results are only satisfactory when the mares are good; but there is a great dearth of strong, well-bred mares in the country, and not much disposition on the part of the farmers to breed at the present time.

In hunting circles the Duke was known as the "Green Duke." Three dukes kept hounds, and they were called after the colour of their liveries, green, blue, and red. When I first saw the noble Duke in the hunting field—to know who he was—he was riding the beautiful Bolero, by Partisan out of Minuet, by Waxy. It was

his Grace's habit to be very punctual at the meet, 10.30, and to ride round and say "Good morning" to all. I am afraid that there are not many living now who hunted in those days; but there are some; two may be mentioned—Mr. Joe Bailey and Mr. Richard Shepherd, both staunch fox-hunters.

The Grafton country, at that time, extended from Weedon on the north to Creslow on the south, Brackley on the west, and Easton Horn Wood on the east. A rather large slice on the north was, and is now, neutral with the Pytchley, and I can bear testimony to the liberal manner in which that hunt has acted towards the Grafton during my life. On the eastern side, from the end of Easton Horn Wood to the Northampton and Newport Turnpike, the country is neutral with the Oakley.

In the time of the Duke of whom I am now writing, the hounds hunted three days a week only. Foxes were not very plentiful, but ran straighter than they do now. With so much neutral country, it gives me the greatest pleasure to state that from those early days until the present I never knew of the slightest friction between the Grafton and their neighbours. On the contrary, the greatest friendship existed.

I may relate one little incident, or rather two, for it was double-barrelled :—

George Beers was in his zenith, hunting a rare pack in the Oakley country; it was in the year 1838.—Carter, a great fox-catcher, doing the same in the Grafton country. Both packs were on the eastern side, from the Grafton. Beers found a fox one afternoon, a long way down in the Chase, and ran him for his life up to Salcey Forest. He had no sooner reached the forest than he found Carter's hounds breaking up his fox. Beers behaved better than one might have expected, knowing his failing, a hasty temper. He said to Carter, "I will be even with you, old boy, one day."

During the following season the two packs were hunting in the same district. Carter's fox ran into the Chase; Beers heard them coming, collected his hounds, and set his whippers-in to look out. It was not long before they viewed Carter's fox; Beers took up the line, and killed him. The latter came up and said to Beers:

"You have killed my fox!"

"Yes, old man, now we are quits!"

Since that time nothing of the kind has occurred. Mr. Arkwright, who hunted the Oakley for so many years, never made an appointment on

that side of the country without writing to the Grafton, and the same courtesy was extended by them.

I must now return to the Grafton Field. It consisted of a large number of farmers, a few resident squires, and a nice sprinkling of parsons, for whom I had the greatest regard, as I think one of their great duties on earth is to countenance and encourage good fellowship.

The Reverend Lorraine Smith hunted in those days, and a finer specimen of an English gentleman, a better dressed man, or a kinder man to the poor never lived. Mrs. Lorraine Smith and her two daughters, with Miss Stone from Blisworth, were the only ladies who hunted then. The Misses Lorraine Smith rode in scarlet bodices and grey skirts. The improved side-saddle was not then invented to enable a lady to ride over fences. The farmers rode good horses in those days, and the good mounts they had gave them a great taste for riding over the country, and made many good horsemen.

By the time I began—as the ladies say of their babies—“to take notice,” the Duke of Grafton was in declining years, and I saw very little of his Grace in the field. During the last four or five years of the Duke’s keeping hounds, Colonel

George FitzRoy, of Grafton-Regis, took the management in the field, and carried out his uncle's directions to the satisfaction of everyone. No finer horseman, no better sportsman than he was, ever lived in the Grafton country. He rode three beautiful chesnuts of the Duke's, and the same number of his own; his manners were as perfect as his horsemanship; his judgment was good all round; he was for many years consulted by the Grafton Masters, and all the huntsmen sang his praises. He planted a covert on a farm which he rented of the Duke; it is called the Colonel's Covert to this day, and I hope it will stand for all time to the memory of that good man.



GEORGE CARTER.

CHAPTER II.

GEORGE CARTER, HUNTSMAN.

IN the year 1833, during my early boyhood, Carter was first whipper-in to Ned Rose; he left for a time, and went to the Oakley. Ned was not successful, and let the hounds get out of repute, so he gave up. Carter was engaged, and came as huntsman, but he found the hounds so bad that he went to the Duke after the first season, and told his Grace he was afraid he should not give satisfaction. The Duke, with his usual urbanity, said, "Carter, I am quite satisfied with what you have done."

From that time Carter took heart, and made a pack that was of the highest character. As I was not out of my teens before Carter left, I only intend to give a few early impressions which are imprinted on my mind.

On leaving school, I went hunting as often as I could get leave from my father to do so. Carter

was very fond of boys, and did not mind my riding after him, but encouraged me. A young gentleman was out on his pony, riding near Carter, one day at Mantel's Heath, when a fox came away in front of them.

"What's that?" the boy asked.

George took off his cap, and, waving it towards the fox, he said :

"That is him, sir!"

I was one day with the hounds in Whittlebury Forest, then full of deer. Carter found a fox, and hounds ran well for a time. We then saw hundreds of deer go off Wakefield Lawn into Lady Coppice; the hounds went in at the side as the deer came in at the top. In a few minutes the pack broke up, every hound seemed to have a deer; I never saw such a scrimmage! The young deer fell a prey, and from their cries I always thought that they killed three brace. Carter, of course, blew his horn. Stevens and Dickens, the whippers-in, were at work; the deer crossed the riding at such speed and with such bounds that we were obliged to look out. Carter rode quietly down the riding. Some of the old hounds came at once; as their numbers increased he walked down to Broadmoor pond, and gave them a drink. Clarke, the Royal keeper, came upon the scene—

a fine man, but rather lame; he was uttering great lamentations, and, mopping his forehead, said ruefully:

"You will kill half my deer!"

George and the keeper were great friends, so he replied:

"My dear fellow, I can't help it; I have hounds out to-day which will run anything from an earwig to an elephant!!!"

Mr. Clarke was a superior man in his position, and had been in the forest for many years. The keepers had a pack of bloodhounds with which to hunt the deer out of the enclosed coppices; at times the deer would leave the forest and run over the country.

Knowing I was fond of hunting, Clarke told me that, when he first came to the forest, there were marten cats in it, and that the greatest treat I could have with a pack of hounds would be to hear them running a marten cat; the note changed, and the music was delightful; they ran the thickets for a time, then went up a tree, and no scent was so welcome to a hound as that of a marten cat. Being great poachers, they were exterminated. Clarke said: "Our foxes are stout;" and added that "In the old days the hounds went to Euston; the Duke of Grafton's

seat in Suffolk, for a month or two in the season. Foxes were dug out in the forest, and sent down, all of them marked. They dug out an old fox of great size, and sent him; the next year they dug him out again at Wakefield!! and sent him down once more. He beat the hounds a second time, and, on his return, a sheep-dog caught him near Newmarket and killed him"—an ignoble end.

I must now hark back to Carter. No huntsman ever had a finer voice than he had, and at proper times he would use it to some purpose; his cheer was soul-stirring. In a cast, when a hound made a good hit, you might have heard him for miles! He always named the hound he was cheering.

Carter did not ride into the woods when trying. He had many friends, and liked a chat. Every now and then he would let his hounds hear him all over the wood. He said that if hounds were used that way they would get on the drag better than when hurried along; and would draw all the covert if they knew where he was, and the Field would stand with him. He was, one day, which happened to be New Year's Day, riding very slowly, at the end of Grimscote Heath, talking to Mr. Winkles, who said:

"George, I have heard a fox run down the

wood; I have heard of a fox being found in a bird's nest!"

"He must have come out of one," said Carter.

In a minute there was a holloa away, and a fine run we had, and killed the fox near Northampton. A Scottish gentleman named Wemyss was out: I heard him singing the praises of hounds and huntsman.

In 1841, a fox from Grub's Coppice took us over Foxley Fields to Tite's Coppice, Green's Park, Weedon Wood, skirted Allithorn, over Stuchbury, down to Thenford, and through it into Middleton field; he turned to the left over the brook, near Willifer's Covert, and up to Farthinghoe to some farm buildings, where a rat-catcher was busy at his calling. The hounds ran up to him, Carter stood still, but the hounds could do no more. Carter said, "You have killed my fox!" *etc.*——

His tone was so severe that the man was frightened, and would not confess. The hounds had not been gone more than half-an-hour before the farmer came home, and made the rat-catcher fetch him the fox out of the loft. Carter forgot that honey catches flies better than vinegar!

That was a good run imprinted on my mind by its merits, and by what I saw that day. A lady

♦

named Miss Nellie Holmes was out, topping the fences like a bird, to the admiration of all; and when we came to the brook, over she went; I went with Carter to the ford. That was the first lady whom I saw go over a country. There is one certainty about ladies, what one does another will do, if it be worth the doing. Very soon others were at the game, and many have played it well since.

Mr. Tom Westley was the ladies' pilot. He was a good rider, and rather noted on the turf for the num berof horses he ran and the few races he won. He did win the Chester Cup with Councillor, bred within about two miles of Wakefield. On the dam's side was Grafton blood.

Mr. Osbaldeston, owing to Westley's bad luck, called him "Worseley."

This was also the first day I saw Jem Mason in the hunting field. I had seen him win steeplechases on Lottery not long before. I have never seen a man since who could show off a hunter, or a good suit of clothes, to greater advantage. I hope I may say more of Jem later on.

Carter's last season with the Grafton Hounds was that of 1841-42. The sport was exceedingly good throughout, and foxes were caught in all directions, which greatly alarmed Lord

Southampton, who was to succeed the Duke. There was one old fox which Carter could not manage; he ran him twice from Seawell Wood, but did not catch him. As I cannot give a correct account of the sport, I pass on to the second week in February, 1842. Carter found his fox at Tite's Coppice, and came away with a capital scent over the brook in the bottom, pointing for Foxley, hounds bearing to the right over the hill about a mile from Green's Norton. Mr. Jack Smith, a grandson of the Duke of Grafton, and Mr. Richard Shepherd, on two grey horses, were having a fine set-to. On the hill was my good father, out for the last time to see the hounds. As we passed him he called to me to go on, saying "That mare can beat either of those grey horses."

I never disobeyed my father's orders, so I called upon my mare; she was 16.2, and in the Stud Book. At the first fence I went up to them, in the next field I passed them and jumped a good bullfinch first; I was no sooner over than it struck me that my head was far too empty to keep matters balanced before two such horsemen, so I held back, while these two smart young men, in green coats, on grey horses with bang tails, were having a real contest.

They took their own line, and swung over the tops of the hedges, and famously matched they were; we came to three large ploughed fields, still going evenly; then grass again, big fences, and so they went to the end, which was at the Towcester Lodges, leading up to Easton Neston House. Carter soon came up and asked where hounds checked. "Just here," was the reply. "He can't have gone over the wall, or up the road; he is about here somewhere," was his remark. He called the hounds back to a large hedge near the road. "Here he is!" Carter said, and hounds killed him. That was the last day on which I hunted with Carter. My father, who was in a weak state of health, broke a blood-vessel, and passed away on the 21st of that month, so I did not hunt again that season.

Mr. Assheton-Smith came and bought the pack in March, and Carter went with them. Ned Stevens went to the Warwickshire as huntsman, and Will Dickens to Mr. Lowndes as first whipper-in.

CHAPTER III.

ADAM SHERWOOD, CHIMNEY - SWEEP AND SPORTSMAN.

NO history of the Grafton Hunt can be considered complete which does not contain a memoir of one who was a great celebrity in his day—I mean Adam Sherwood, a sweeper of chimneys residing at Stony Stratford. He had a great taste for fox-hunting, and gained a considerable knowledge of the “Art and Science.” Living so near to the forest, he obtained a good deal of practice in the autumn and spring. He had no great taste for cross-country work; for, truth to tell, his steed was not exactly thoroughbred. Adam’s hunting costume consisted, most appropriately, of a “chimney-pot” hat, the altitude of which had been considerably lowered by repeated bangs upon the top, and large wrinkles on the sides; a green smock-frock, and corduroy continuations completed his attire. Adam always wore a smile upon

his face, and had a twinkle of humour in his eye, which greatly illuminates the countenance, even if it be a dark one. He was gifted with a very pleasing voice ; and when he used it it was evident that it was directed by an intelligent and active mind.

On hunting days he always carried a flask. It was the first of the kind I ever saw ; two glass bottles welded together at the lower ends and up to the necks ; and each mouth was neatly corked ; in fact it was very like one of the oil and vinegar cruets with the crossed necks. In offering refreshment to a friend, he would say, " One side gives gin, the other brandy ; I am sure it is pure," and he would name his wine-merchant. Adam became so popular that Mr. Lorraine Smith provided him with a coat of arms, which I am happy to be able to reproduce.

When hounds were running in the forest, Sherwood was a great authority ; he was very correct about a hunted fox, and had learned the secret of keeping his mouth shut when he saw a fresh one. In the forest foxes were fond of running into coverts. When fresh ones appeared, and turned back, Adam was very clever at seeing them, and when he did, he would make the wood ring with his " view-holloa." One day the Duke



*To sweep the chimney is my profession,
 With Brush and Shovel to make alarm,
 I've gained it by my discretion,
 To turn my Brush and Shovel to Arms!*

The Crest and Arms of the renowned Adam Sheswood

heard him, and, going up, asked him if it were the hunted fox. "Yes, your Grace, and a very black fox, your Grace!"

"Out of compliment to you, Adam," said the Duke. Here Carter came up. "Go to this fox, Carter," said his Grace, "this is the hunted fox; Sherwood says it is." After the day's hunting was over, Adam was very fond of making remarks about it.

Later on, when George Beers became huntsman, Adam used rather to tread on his corns, by telling him where he thought he had done wrong. He used very forcible argument, but George was a hard nut to crack. On one such occasion it became evident that Beers's limit of good temper was getting strained; Adam, perceiving this, in the greatest good humour, said, "Ah, well! I never in my life knew a huntsman who would allow that he was in any fault;" and there the conversation changed.

Adam did not in the least mind talking "shop," or taking an order, in the hunting-field. He had a wonderful trade, and was fond of telling people how many gentlemen's chimneys he swept. I once asked him which was his largest house. "Mr. Cavendish's, Thornton Hall," he replied, "it has 101 chimneys."

One day Adam had finished his morning's work at the Rev. Mr. Drummond's, and was taking his money. The reverend gentleman said :

" You black-coated men earn white money very quickly, Adam." " Yes, sir ; we gentlemen who wear black coats do earn money very quickly, don't we, sir ? "

Adam was fond of a game of whist, at which he was a good player. I have met him in Stony Stratford of an evening, dressed for his whist party. He put on another dress then, a good silk hat, carefully brushed, a nice cloth coat, sporting style, and such a waistcoat ! worked worsted, with a scarlet ground, and the thickest row of foxes' teeth down the front, instead of buttons, and nicely spotted all over with foxes' heads ; which sumptuous article of apparel was worked for him by the Misses Lorraine Smith.

By dint of hard work and taking care, Sherwood made money ; but he sustained a nasty blow in losing £400 by a bank failure. Nevertheless, he saved enough to retire upon, and to enable him to enjoy that repose in old age which he so well deserved. No man in his station stood higher in the estimation of all classes than did Adam Sherwood.



CHARLES, THIRD BARON SOUTHAMPTON.

From a portrait by Sir Francis Grant.

CHAPTER IV.

CHARLES, THIRD BARON SOUTHAMPTON, M.F.H.

CHARLES, the third Lord Southampton, resided many years at Whittlebury, and held high offices in the county of Northampton. He was Lord Lieutenant of the county, chairman of Quarter Sessions, also of the Board of Guardians, and was always taking the lead in public business; his able services were greatly appreciated.

In 1842 Lord Southampton succeeded the Duke of Grafton as Master of Hounds, having hunted the Quorn for a few seasons. In 1830 Sir Francis Burdett wrote to Mr. John Moore, of the Melton Club: "You must come and see the best pack of hounds I have ever seen in Leicestershire. The Duke of Rutland has hunted twice with us this week, when his own hounds have been at their best places; wonderful sport; tired horses every day; foxes always killed, or

accounted for, and made to run to distant points, instead of running like rabbits ! ”

This pack was bought of the Marquis of Tavistock ; George Mountford was huntsman, and George Beers second whipper-in. Will Derry joined them as first whipper-in.

Lord Southampton bought a pack of hounds of Mr. Harvey Coombe, which had previously been bought from Mr. Osbaldeston, and were all bred by that gentleman. They were a very variegated pack in colour : Sailor, Saucebox, Syren, Symphony, and Singwell were all white ; Challenger, the most vivid yellow and white. The noted Merriman, nearly all black, was half-faced, and had a “ wall-eye ” ; he was by Furrier, by Yarborough Chaser, and that blood predominated in goodness during the twenty years Lord Southampton hunted the country. Harry Taylor hunted, during the first season, with Tom Flint as first, and George Wells as second whipper-in.

Mr. Coombe sent ten hunters to Towcester, with the intention of hunting ; Will Todd, the then late huntsman, went as stud-groom. When Todd went to the first meet, all the old hounds knew him, and wanted to join him. Mr. Coombe did not hunt more than two days. He had a friend

named Beech, who intended to hunt regularly on Mr. Coombe's horses. This friend was taken ill; the doctor was sent for, and prescribed some medicine. The patient said "No, I never took a dose in my life, and I never will." He kept his word—and died. On that account the stud was sent away, and the visit ended. During the first season there was only moderate sport, some quick things and kills, but Lord Southampton said: "They don't catch the stout foxes."

In the spring of 1843 Will Derry came, and two new whippers-in, but no better sport followed with the change. In 1844 Lord Southampton engaged Ned Rose, who had hunted before George Carter for the Duke. Ned had been keeping the "Spotted Dog" (the "Talbot") at Towcester, and subsequently "The Cock" at Stony Stratford. His upper proportions had so much increased and his legs decreased in size that he resembled a "beer barrel on toothpicks." Lord Southampton sent Ned out in July, and asked me to go with him to Nun Wood, on the estate where I was then living. We went and killed a fox, but more by accident than anything else. The hounds ran into standing corn, so they went home and remained for three weeks.

Rose accomplished his cub-hunting with credit;

but cross-country work he could not manage. Lord Southampton next engaged an aged man named Boxall, and a disappointing season was the result. In 1845 Jack Jones was huntsman, he had been first whipper-in. Jack did fairly well; still Lord Southampton was not satisfied. A man named Bullen hunted a little during the next season, and my lord did more himself. We had some very fair sport.

Butler, from Yorkshire, of great repute, came, but he had grown heavy and very fussy. He had been, I have no doubt, a good man in his day. On one occasion, in the month of November, we were in Plane Woods; the hounds were engaged with a creeping, miserable little fox for more than an hour. My lord came to me and said: "I will leave this fox, would not you?"

"No, my lord, I would not," I replied. "Twenty couples of hounds and three men to be beaten by such a bad fox, I think, looks cowardly; give him an hour more." In ten minutes this fox started, and ran an eight mile point without touching a covert, for the last mile the hounds ran in view.

Butler did not finish the season, and we got through without anything better than the above-mentioned run.

In the spring of 1847 Lord Southampton bought a pack of hounds from Lord Shannon, which were sold from conscientious motives, the famine being at its height in Ireland. Tom Smith was huntsman, and came with the pack, bringing a whipper-in. Smith was a very clever man, and a good sportsman. The old pack had a strong draft made out of them, and the new one was served likewise; a large number of the new hounds were kept to prove them in cub-hunting.

By this time I had made the acquaintance of many good sportsmen, and Grafton Fridays were very popular with the Bicester men. That country was justly renowned for hard riders and staunch lovers of the chase. Among them were Mr. Dan Webb and his son "Jack," as he called him; the late Mr. Sclater-Harrison, of Shelswell; Mr. Tom Drake, Sir Henry Peyton, Mr. Hoffmann, and Mr. Henry Lambton, the latter just from college. It would be hard to find in any country such a party; good riders, and generous supporters of the hunt in a pecuniary sense.

Mr. Webb, the senior of the party, kept a large stud of first-class hunters, and said that every good run cost him £100. No man could be more particular than he was in buying. He measured the horse, for that reason the "faculty"

who dealt in horseflesh called him "Tape Webb." He rode lovely horses; Liberty, Pigeon, and Cats'-meat were those he rode with us. Not a particle of ambition had left him; I never saw a man of his years so brilliant. He was noted for dry sayings and quaint remarks. One day his son rode at a "double" with a wide bank in the centre, his horse jumped into the second ditch and rolled over. The father came past and said: "I will give you a hundred for him now, Jack!"

Mr. Webb asked me for a horse. I said: "You are so particular." "Yes," he replied; "they must clean knives and talk French or they are not clever enough for me, and no speedy-balls required!" He said he liked our Friday country better than any he rode over; there was less brutality about it. That was true enough. With the exception of the Sulgrave bottom, and a ravine near Blakesley, there is nothing one might not get over with a good hunter. The only man who attempted the former was the late Sir Charles Knightley, who rode at it fence-side, jumped half-way over the brook, pitched on to a hard road and knocked his front teeth out.

The late Lord Howth jumped into the ravine near Blakesley, and was so much injured that he

could not be moved from Whittlebury for a long time. The gentlemen I mentioned did the country justice; they knew all the farmers, and were always welcome.

There were some good men of our own in those days: Lord Charles FitzRoy, Mr. Rainald Knightley, the present Lord Barrington, Mr. Stratton, and Mr. Fred Villiers, until he left and went to the Pytchley country. Lord Barrington jumped the biggest water-jump I ever heard of in the country; it was near Towcester. I went with a friend and put the tape over it last summer. A horse cannot get over without jumping 27 feet, but the depth of the banks are enough to shy any horse. I saw it done. I don't think it will be exceeded very soon. In those days we were always jumping water. Two lines of railway have changed the line foxes used to run very much.

Time passed on, and cub-hunting came for the before-mentioned combined pack. Lord Southampton would give his orders, which were very strict, but would not hunt himself until the middle of October, unless he thought things were not going right. The huntsman was told at the beginning not to run an old fox. "Get on to cubs, and keep in the woods; by no means go over a country. In the first place

the farmers don't want you, and I want my hounds to be taught to hunt before they are asked to run over a country. You may keep the foxes in, and the more you make them rattle about the coverts the better." Until the leaf had fallen, with the exception of a day or two when my lord came out himself, hounds were confined to the woods. Smith had a good cub-hunting season, and gave satisfaction, as the few runs I will give prove; but he was very heavy, and very unlucky in getting falls. Lord Southampton lost his services so often, that he was obliged to change again.

During a few seasons, about this time, an arrangement was made between the Pytchley Masters and the owners of Badby Wood and Staverton Wood for Lord Southampton to hunt those coverts regularly; consequently we met at Badby Toll-bar very frequently. Our runs were on many occasions to Shuckburgh, and we were very fortunate in not running to ground, and very successful in killing our foxes. Those coverts always pleased me better to run to than to draw. The large fields prevent foxes from leaving.

Smith had a fine run from Tiffeld Allotments, taking Astcote Thorns, Grub's Coppice, Lichborough, Farthingstone, to Hen Wood without

a check; the fox turned to the left, by Little Preston, up to Canon's Ashby. Hounds ran away from huntsman and whippers-in, but the fox beat them. Lord Alford was out, and rode splendidly; he was a "Jem Mason" amongst the gentlemen of those days; it was a treat to watch his elegant figure, and the great composure with which he sailed over a country. He would smoke a cigar through a run with the greatest ease.

On the last Monday in March, 1848, the hounds were on the north side, engaged, as is too much the case there, with more than one fox. In the afternoon we drew Badby, and a fox took us over the Newnham brook. Six men only secured a good start; they were Mr. Knightley, and two gentlemen in scarlet whom I did not know, with three farmers in black coats; we passed Newnham on the left, crossed the London road, going as straight as a line, just in sight of Watford Gorse on the right, and continued in the same straight-necked fashion, without going into a covert, down to Sulby. This ought to have been the best run during Lord Southampton's time, but with a heavy huntsman, and hounds none the fresher, the fox, said to be dead tired and near at hand, beat us. This is the sort of fox

that wants tackling in the morning. People talk of hounds racing at night; how can they after the miles of running they have had during the day? We reached home about midnight. There was a great oration about it, and next day at Northampton Races it was a subject of much conversation. I agree with Captain Thompson that without a kill there is a disappointment that destroys the pleasure to a great extent. I was quite sick of jumping. Mr. Knightley, Messrs. Cowper, of Farnborough, and G. Hitchcock rode very well indeed, but very few survived to the end.

That season Lord Southampton caught his foxes well with the bitches. In the spring we had a very fast thing from Plumpton to Moreton Pinkney, by Ashby Ponds, Ganderton's on the right, and over that nice grass Vale as hard as they could go, over the brook, and pulled him down under an oak tree standing a little way out of the ditch near Woodford. There was a person out in a green coat, none other than George Beers, who was engaged for the next season. Lord Southampton told Beers he had heard that he was free with his tongue to the Field. "I wish you to bear in mind that I shall not allow that here; I reserve that privilege to myself," he remarked.

No man knew better how to keep a Field in order than did the noble lord. I never saw him do an unsportsmanlike action; he would give his Field a good chance, no marshalling up in a corner, with the hounds and covert all down wind, so that they could neither hear nor see. A good blowing up is much to be preferred. No nicer man was there than Lord Southampton until the first hound spoke; then he was prepared to rebuke the first man whom he saw out of his place.

George Beers commenced his duties as huntsman to the Grafton Hounds in 1848, and he was then 48 years of age. Lord Southampton bought two of the best horses out of the Oakley stud, which was sold when Mr. Magniac gave up, and Major Hogg took the hounds. Matters settled down, good sport prevailed, and Beers's hound knowledge, and the condition into which he succeeded in getting his pack, placed them in a very proud position, and I shall simply say that the sport was highly satisfactory, and pass on. In the last week in March we had a brilliant twenty-nine minutes from one of the Bradden coverts, over some of the finest grass, and ran to ground near Grub's Coppice. The fox was in view, and very tired, when Lord Southampton came up Beers told his lordship. He put his hands upon his hips,

drew a long breath, and said, " Yes, if I had had Charles Payn as a huntsman, just that extra condition he would have put upon the hounds would have killed him ! "

Ben Morgan, who had been whipping-in to Sir Richard Sutton, had been so strongly recommended to Lord Southampton, that he, against his own inclination, engaged Morgan as huntsman. The Oakley gladly took Beers back again, with Mr. Arkwright as Master. Morgan was a very fine horseman indeed, and thought a great deal too much of his own performance. On a good horse it was a treat to see him ; but on a horse which he did not quite like he was a duffer, and would not try. It was soon evident that Lord Southampton had spoiled a good whipper-in to make a bad huntsman.

We found a fox at Grimscote Heath, went away with a rattle, and everything looked like a good run ; Astcote Thorns left on the right, over the turnpike, Astcote Village just on the left, a very fine line, down the Vale between Dalscote and Gayton. Before this the fox had shown himself in front ; again and again he did so, the huntsman screamed and blew his horn, the Field, too, was wild ; how catching excitement is ! This sort of thing continued until hounds reached the bridge

crossing the canal into Rothersthorpe field ; the hounds then had their heads up, and no more was made of him. Any yokel can get hounds' heads up, but it is more than a clever man can do to get them down again. I never saw Lord Southampton more annoyed, but he said very little. Morgan had one good run afterwards with a bag-fox from Bradden, but altogether he was unsuccessful.

At that time there was a farmer living at Potcote, named Samuel Ayers, who was a great sportsman. There could not be a better fox preserver, neither could anyone take more pains in the matter. He was born on the Grafton Estate, his father being one of the Duke's tenants, who made money by breeding hunters. On a small farm he kept a few brood mares, and took as much trouble with and care of them as a shorthorn breeder does of his young stock, Sir Justinian Isham, of Lamport, was his chief customer, and gave long prices for many horses.

One Tuesday morning Mr. Ayers made a very clever capture of a fox. From information he received—as the policemen always say in court—he mounted his pony and galloped over to Farthingstone, distant about four miles, where he found two men engaged in digging out a fox

from a drain. They had succeeded in getting the fox into a narrow compass, but could not get him into the bag. He dismounted from his pony, and said to them: "Lend me the bag, you don't understand it." Mr. Ayers placed the bag in proper form, and told them to poke at the other end of the drain; and into the bag Reynard went with a rush. Mr. Ayers tied the mouth of the bag up, swung the fox over his shoulder, and promptly rode away with it, leaving the men looking very blank!

Lord Southampton was in Towcester once a fortnight at the Board meeting, and generally came through the market and had a chat with the farmers. I was deputed to ask his lordship to hunt this fox the next day at Bradden, where the hounds were to meet. I told him that Mr. Ayers had bagged a fox, and that he wanted him hunted next day, and that he was such a good one he would give them some work to catch him.

"I won't hunt a bag-fox!" his lordship exclaimed; "my huntsman is wild enough now, and if he knows he is hunting a 'bagman' I shall have to shut him up!"

I said, "My lord, it seems a pity, after all Mr. Ayers' trouble, not to hunt him; Morgan need not know."

"Well, if you can manage that I don't mind," his lordship replied; and there it ended for the day.

There is a little place called Bradden Pond, with a growth of underwood round it. Thither the fox was sent in the morning, with instructions to the man in charge to sit on the bank and keep the fox until he should hear the crack of a whip. When the hounds left the village, and reached the hill where there is a fine country before you; I said, "My lord, I will just go and crack my whip against the pond."

"All right," he assented, "that will save our going down."

I did so, and was shortly afterwards told by the man who had brought the fox that he had gone through the water and towards the other side. I was soon there, and he was as soon away. My hat was up, and the hounds came up very quickly; it was good grass; they set to with a will and raced away over the hill, leaving Caswell on the left. I noticed the best hound in the pack (Druid) behind, instead of driving his fox; in the next field he went up to the front, but when he felt the scent he stopped abruptly, and no more would he do! The fox, not knowing the coverts, avoided them, and pointed for Cold Higham; when parallel

with Astcote Thorns he crossed the turnpike at high pressure, over Astcote and Eastcote field down to Banbury Lane. There Lord Southampton met me in the road.

"This is a good run," he said warmly, "and no one has found us out!"

"Oh, yes there has, my lord!" I meaningly replied.

"Who?" he queried.

"Druid!" I said, "he is not here, he gave up long ago!"

We then bore to the right under Gayton, and over Blisworth fields, up to Courteenhall House, where the fox was killed. It was a good nine mile point, I suppose. A half-circle made it fourteen miles as hounds ran. The horses were pretty well tired.

Lord Southampton said, "Although it is so early, I will go home."

I do not think the huntsman ever knew that the fox was a 'bagman'!

On our way home I asked Morgan to touch his horn, as I had seen Druid behind. As we went over Shoseley Grounds, the old dog, only a four-season hunter, came up. He was the tallest hound Lord Southampton owned, twenty-six inches, and one of the best. That was the run of

the season. After this Morgan left, and succeeded Stevens in Warwickshire.

Lord Southampton entertained very largely; many of the single noblemen came, and brought their hunters to the village of Whittlebury, and stayed some time. The present Lord Cork, the late Lord Portsmouth, Lord Somerton, Mr. W. Craven, a good man over the country, and the late Lord Rosslyn. There was always a capital party. My lord lectured pretty much, but he was very jolly for all that. If it happened that an extra dressing fell to my share, he always rode home with me afterwards, if he could. I told Lord John Scott that I would rather be blown up by Lord Southampton than praised by half the people!

CHAPTER V.

DICK SIMPSON, HUNTSMAN.

DICK SIMPSON came from the Puckeridge; but I think he had spent a year on a farm he had just bought before coming. He had the character of catching his foxes too quickly. The Grafton foxes when they once get upon their legs require some catching. He was nick-named "Dirty Dick," which was a slander, for, beyond carrying a dab of mud in the hollow of his ear for two or three days, there was nothing to complain of on the score of cleanliness. A more civil man there could not have been, and he had, as a rule, a shy, retiring manner. After a fox fresh found he was a demon, with a charming voice, and a fine-toned horn. He delighted Mr. Clarke, the Royal keeper. "Hark at him!" he would say; "he puts the 'demi-semi' into it!"

Lord Southampton sent him on the first morning of cub-hunting sixteen miles to Easton Horn



DICK SIMPSON.

Wood, where there was a good litter of cubs. Simpson would have killed the lot, he thought, for about fox catching he really had nothing to learn. With Bob Ward as head whipper-in, and Tom Carr as second, it was very bad for foxes. In all my time I only knew three men with us who could catch woodland foxes satisfactorily; namely, George Beers, Dick Simpson, and Frank Beers.

Cub-hunting went well. Lord Southampton never advertised before the middle of November. On the last Friday of cub-hunting we were at Haversham Wood with twenty couples of bitches. We found a fox at the top end of the wood, near Mr. William Scott's farm (he was a rare good sportsman), and a lively find it was! Dick cheered, hounds came together and went away like a flock of pigeons down to the farmhouse, over those large grass fields and through the corner of Gayhurst Wood, away over the road and Stoke fields into Stoke Park. Dick had stopped cheering, as he liked to do at starting: he said it made the fox run straight. We took the rides nearly up to the hummocky field—which is well known for a teaser to a horse which gallops with a straight knee—and down to the bridle-gate at the corner of the forest, the hounds a good field

before the horses. The fox ran through an old stone pit and went into the riding, and there he kept, crossed the " Bull-Head " road over the lawn to the left of the house, into the riding again, hounds gaining ground on us. The fox then went into Quinton field, Dick blew his horn ; there was not a creature to be seen. He then went about half-way between Quinton and Preston Park Wood, down to the brook on the left of the Deanery ; straight up the hill to the Newport turnpike, past the farmhouses on the left, and on to Houghton field. We could not gain an inch ! We were then on the steeple-chase field (where I saw Captain Beecher win on Vivian). There are ox-fences there. We had not had much jumping so far, and the fences were so large that we were obliged to jump timber, which I very greatly disliked unless it were covered with moss and lay away from me. However, we were obliged to have it ; the pack kept on, not a hound fell out of the ranks, and they sang away as only those hounds could, through the Furrier blood. They crossed the turnpike road and entered the meadows, and went for Northampton, ran straight to the mill, and on to the river-bank, joining the town ; there they checked, and cast left-handed along the bank, going to the right to a garden in the centre of which was a bed of winter

greens. A bitch called Mischief made a dash into them, out bolted the fox, her note called attention, and hounds tore his jacket.

It never fell to my lot to see a more complete chase than that. A very stout fox, and such a pack of hounds ! They ran together all the way in the most perfect manner. Simpson remarked that he thought after that breathing they would please Lord Southampton on the next Monday ; and he would look up his whippers-in and go home. About two miles on our way we met Bob Ward ; how frequently it happens that good runs are missed from want of attention. The run was eleven miles from the place where we found, by the map ; there was not a check the whole way, and not a hound tailed. I do not suppose a fox will ever run like that again, and his running the ridings must have been caused by the state of alarm he was in from the pressure put upon him at starting. Salcey Forest covers fifteen hundred acres, and is a good home for foxes. The forester, Mr. Gulliver, and his uncle who preceded him, have always done their very best for the Grafton Hunt.

We had as visitors in the country Lord and Lady Strathmore. His lordship was a good man between the flags, on the Switcher, but not very

good to hounds. Lord Southampton had a good run from Plumpton, away by Woodend, with Blakesley on the left, down the Vale to Kingthorn Wood, in the greatest of all hurries. The fox pointed for Towcester, but bore to the right over Handley and Abthorpe field, hounds never checking; and they ran past Barford's barn and came up with their fox in the road. There the hounds caught sight of him, and gained ground all the way to Bucknells. Lady Strathmore was going in the front throughout, on a lovely chesnut horse, when the hounds went into the covert. In my lady went, into a dense thicket, it was a wonder that she was not pulled off; but no! they killed the fox just inside, and she held the horse for the man who took the fox away from the hounds. She was the second lady I had seen go to hounds, and her brilliant riding accorded well with her elegant and beautiful person. During the next year we heard the sad news that Lady Strathmore had died abroad, having taken cold from sitting on damp ground.

Sport was very good throughout the season, Simpson hunting the woodlands with a part of the open country two days a week. In the following season a change took place. Mr. Lowndes gave up the top country, and went into Warwickshire.

Lord Southampton then hunted the Grafton country in its entirety, continuing to hunt the Monday and Friday country as before ; Simpson hunting the Vale of Aylesbury on Wednesday, the home woodlands on Thursday, and the upper country, with the Yardley Chase side, on alternate Saturdays. No cub-hunting was done in the new district.

The great opening day was at Creslow, by invitation from Mr. Rowland, which brought together the most aristocratic Field I ever saw in the absence of Royalty. Many of Lord Southampton's friends from Melton were there: Lord Gardner, Mr. Little-Gilmour, and Mr. Coke—"Billy" Coke, as he was called—all fine riders, Mrs. Jack Villiers, a large attendance from London, about twenty Oxonians, and sportsmen of all classes from miles round. A finer field of horses I never saw. It was a pretty sight to see the party walk along the top of the "Great Ground," 365 acres, to the covert, which is not large, but pretty thick, and never without foxes on the opening day.

A litter of cubs was soon on the move, one of which fell a victim in a double hedge. Another was found, and went away on the Whitchurch side, rather downhill. We soon came to a tall

hedge with long upward growers, and a drop. The Oxonians advanced in a body and took possession. A most amusing scene ensued ; some of their horses refused, others collided, and a great proportion fell. Most of the Field left. Mr. John Roper, of Grafton, was watching the fun, when Lord Southampton came up and asked him what he was doing so far from home. "My lord, I am watching these young gentlemen taking their degrees," he replied. In time they crossed and we followed. One of those large doubles which necessitate a double stile came in front ; there we found a young gentleman standing over his horse, which had its head on one stile and hind quarters on the other. Mr. Roper observed, "This is the last degree !" A cut with the whip made the horse plunge and get up. The day ended as it began, with cub-hunting.

Simpson was so good in the woods that the foxes in Salcey Forest and Yardley Chase had a bad time of it. The late Colonel FitzRoy was very fond of going there, and gave directions when required, Lord Southampton rarely hunting on that side. On one occasion we met at Cowper's Oak. Finding a fox handy to it, the hounds were called together, and ran him for an hour from one side of the Chase to the other.

After doing all he could the fox was killed. Simpson went to the Colonel and said :

“ It is a pretty good scent, sir ; I think we can catch another.”

“ Very well,” was the reply, “ go where you please.”

“ I think we will go down to the bottom end of the Chase, sir ; the wind is right to bring us towards home.”

Accordingly we mounted our second horses and trotted down to Old Pond Close; there we found one of the brightest coloured foxes I ever saw. Dick viewed him away. That horn of his and that “ view holloa ” he could give was answered by the hounds, and to work they went with a dash. Hounds took the fox through some of the large quarters, when he made a turn right-handed out into the fields, back to the starting point ; but no resting place found he there, and away he went down to Warrington Toll-bar, turned to the right, and set his head straight down wind, leaving all the coverts untouched. He ran a good line of country, Salcey being his point if he could reach it ; Weston Underwood was on his left and Ravenstone on his right ; then over Cheney farm, where we found ourselves on large grass fields, the dog hounds romped along. We had

a view at him a field in front, Horton Wood on the right and hounds running their hardest ; then they came to a check, Simpson was on the left, and I on the right, and we looked everywhere. Dick would not move, and as we could see well in front, we thought the fox had lain down in the ditch. A signal from Simpson caused me to look round ; there he was holding the fox up—dead ! It was evident he had run along the hedge side, returned over his foil, and then turned out into the field and died. It was one of the finest foxes I ever saw, and the brightest colour, and I never witnessed such an incident before or since.

That season Simpson killed sixteen and a half brace of foxes in Salcey and Yardley Chase.

George Beers had gone back to the Oakley, to a pack of hounds which had so much deteriorated as the result of bad management that it took Mr. Arkwright and him three years to work them up again; consequently they did not hunt the Chase much at that time.

I must now, before I proceed further with the sport, relate the manner in which Lord Southampton acted in a great pestilence which visited Towcester and Silverstone. When travelling abroad and staying in Cairo Lady Southampton was taken ill with small-pox, which greatly

alarmed my lord. In a few days he was also seized, and so severe was his attack that a coffin was placed under his bed and remained there for days. However, his lordship began to mend, and told his attendants that he should not want the coffin! I had this from my lord's own lips. Happily both recovered, but they carried the marks for life. Having passed through such a trial, Lord Southampton always felt great sympathy for sick people.

The cholera visited the above-named places in the month of August, 1854, and raged to a fearful extent. One Tuesday I met Lord Southampton, in Towcester; he said, "I have just left Silverstone, the people are dying very fast, the doctor will be dead before night"—and it was so. On the Thursday following his lordship came down to Towcester and went into the very worst part of the town, where gipsies, tramps, and the very poorest lived. He went into their filthy dwellings, and carried their straw beds, chairs, and tables outside, placing them in a great heap, and set fire to them! There was the greatest excitement in the place, and it was feared the town would be burned down. The articles destroyed were replaced by his lordship, all necessities were provided, and happily the

plague was stayed. A more noble-hearted thing a man could not have done. Seventy-two people died in Towcester, and sixty in Silverstone.

Lord Southampton's kindness had long been appreciated by his neighbours; in 1850 they had presented him with a testimonial, which took the form of a magnificent silver centrepiece representing an oak tree, which stood in the park near his lordship's house, with deer underneath it. It would have been even larger if the subscriptions had not been limited by his own request.

I am now come to Simpson's last season. He had such a desire to return to his farm that he begged his master to let him go; but Lord Southampton was so pleased with him and his great talent that he much regretted that Simpson could not remain.

The best run over the Vale took place from Christmas Gorse. The blackest old vixen I ever saw went away at the bottom. I holloaed, and the dog hounds were away directly, ran up to Mains Hill Farm parallel with the Aylesbury turnpike for some distance, pointing for Creslow; a man breaking stones turning the fox to the right, he then dropped into one of the finest valleys that can be found. Hounds kept one steady but rapid pace for miles, ran under the

Durham hill past Mr. Tomb's house left-handed up to Waddesdon cross roads. Looking over the road I saw the fox roll into the ditch. Simpson did not get a start, but Lord Southampton and he came up one of the roads and we killed the fox after fifty minutes, without the hounds being touched. The fox did not cross one ploughed field. Mr. Coke was out and saw it capitally, and declared that he had never seen a better run in Leicestershire.

On another occasion we had a very fast run in the Vale. Dick handled his fox in thirty-five minutes; he dismounted to take him away, his horse then lay down and stretched himself out, upon which someone went near to see what was the matter, but Simpson called out to him to let him lie, adding "He will be all right when he has got his wind." He was, and went home very well.

Here I may fittingly introduce some poetry which appeared about this time in *Bell's Life in London*.

A DODGING RHYME AND RUN WITH LORD
SOUTHAMPTON'S HOUNDS.

"Twas about half-past six when Tom knocked at my door.
"I've brought your hot water, sir—is there anything more?
The mare is all right, sir—I've got out the 'Buggy,'
There's a bit of a frost, and its *rayther loike* foggy."

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Last night I was late, and a *leetle* bit merry—
I've just cut my chin—"botheration!" the sherry.
Took a cup of hot coffee, ate a rasher of bacon,
And feel fresh as paint, tho' I'd been rather shaken.
"Now Tom, bring my boots, and have the mare ready,
I'll take plenty of time, and drive her up steady.
Buckle my spurs on—pull them up tight,
I'll smoke a cigar—quick, bring me a light!"
In my "Buggy" I settle—turn her head towards "Lunnun,"
I've just forty minutes, but "Topsy's" a "rum 'un."
Eight miles to the station, thro' Shepherd's Bush Gate—
At the Notting Hill Pike, I fancy I'm late.
"Come, go along Topsy—Tom, look out for the time—"
In the New Road I am pounded—I can't make it rhyme.
I send her along—"Ya, ha, ha, hoo—come give us some
room,"
I see it's all right, there goes Anderson's "Broom."
I gave Topsy a pull—the roads were so greasy—
The station! eight minutes to spare, she's done it quite easy.
Now I'm all right for time, I don't care a mag,
Take her home quiet, and just hand me my bag.
The platform looks gay, with a few men in pink.
The Berkhamstead smash don't make them shrink.
Some men there are here, who, by Providence spared,
How nearly the fate of poor Blavey they shared!
By the rail, for six months, a "tenner's" the wack,
But "Topsy" give me for a safe "cover hack."
Her description I'll give, and I'm sure you won't fail
To take "Topsy" *for choice* when matched with the rail.
Her colour is chesnut, her height fourteen "han,"
With a head like a deer, and a neck like a swan,
Her girth is so deep, and her shoulders so strong.
Her hips they stand high, and her haunches are long;
Her legs are like iron, and feet that won't fail,
She is just six year old—with grey hair in her tail.

With courage so good, for she's thorough bred quite,
Not a blemish about her, she is all over right.
As a hack, or in "leather," I am not talking faction,
Her temper's so good, with the finest of action.
She has carried a lady, and will stand at a door,
She has taken out physic, and thought it a "bore."
Such distance I've driven, till some have cried shame,
She has never been sick, nor was ever known lame.
She cost under a score, but one hundred's the price,
If anyone wants her—apply to George Rice.
The bell has just rung, come, jump into the train,
The fog clears away, 'tis beginning to rain.
Altho' cover'd up warm, one comfort I lack—
"Leighton Station's" too far for my little blood hack.
In a soft padded carriage, with elbows quite roomy,
Six fellows now settle, and look rather gloomy.
'Tis not to be wonder'd, for only last week,
The "cover hack" bolted—my eye, what a squeak!
Still undaunted, the men to Aston Abbots they post,
And those who were absent, a good run they lost.
Baron Rothschild's pack, with Tom Ball, what a treat,
Two hours they had, and all were dead beat.
We talked of this run, to drive away sorrow,
It's a good meet to-day—where is it to-morrow?
"Mentmore," says one—"No! I think it is *Hogstone*;"
"That's right," says a third—"Where's Mr. Grimstone?"
We are off now for Leighton, but not in high fettle,
I felt quite alarmed at the tale of George Brettle;
He points to the spot, where, all smother'd in steam,
Lay the wreck of the rail, it seems like a dream.
The shrieks of the people, the steam it kept humming,
And then came the cry—"There's another train coming!!!"
In the tunnel 'tis heard, what danger they fear,
It is nearer approaching—'tis coming quite near.

What power on earth could this terror assuage ?
 At the mouth of the tunnel there stood one John Page.
 Such courage, and foresight, did he attain,
 That he signall'd the driver, who soon stopped the train !
 His presence of mind, and conduct so brave,
 What destruction and sorrow did this worthy man save !

* * * * *

The passengers all, they must regard him.
The Company surely well will reward him !

And now we reach Leighton, each one with a smile,
 Felt pleasure in having to gallop ten mile ;
 We call at " The Castle," each one took his " mixture,"
 Then canter away to " Winslow "—the fixture.

" The meet " was a large one, and brilliant the scene,
 Twenty couple of hounds, so even and clean ;
 Six men, all in scarlet, with quick little Simpson,
 And just in the rear stood noble Southampton.
 The men were so neat, and all so well mounted—
 One hundred and fifty, the field must have counted,
 Beside second horsemen, seen straggling about,
 Who can but admit this a Princely turn-out !
 Amongst them, I see Grafton's eldest son, Euston ;
 Captain Lowndes was not there, neither was Grimstone.
 Percy Barrington was, though, and so was Joe Bailey,
 With Elliott and Anderson, and the bold Maurice Mowbray,
 Hervie Farquar, and FitzRoy, Smith. Duncan, and Levy,
 Cooke, and Jackson, were out, with that rum little Dancey,
 Some " fellows " from Oxford, with Symonds, and Tollit ;
 Harry Poole, he was there, but not his friend Quallett.
 Then galloping up on a pony so queer,
 I could scarcely believe him, the son of a peer !
 His hunter a pony, his " breeches " were " trousers,"
 He gammon'd a parson, and kicked up a row, sirs.

Many others were there, well worthy of mention,
But already I have taken too much your attention.

So we trot to a gorse to pay Charley a visit
“Hi—in! Yooi over there?” How quick they are in it—
“Hoic! hoic! yoic! push him about!”
In a minute we are told that Reynard is out.
On to Addington Gorse, His Lordship took—
Such a place for a find, below, sirs, the brook.
Hounds scarcely in cover, when a whimper was heard;
Charley made up his mind, and was off like a bird!
In the distance is heard, “Tally ho! tally ho!”
And the cover it echoes, “Hoic, hallo! hoic, hallo!”
Like lightning they flew, the brook is in sight,
The landing is good, and your hat is all right:
There, Elliott’s gone over, and next Hervie Farquar,
Cooke and Poole jumped the “*Ford*,” and so did “The
Doctor.”

The Oxford division they all have a shy,
Some got a ducking, and others kept dry.
The country’s so good, they went such a pace,
Each hound, with each other, contending a race;
For near twenty minutes a “cracker” they went,
When a *road* and “Hallo!”—it lost them the scent;
My Lord tried his best, and with Simpson’s assistance,
Poor Charley he beat them, and gave them a distance.
“Second horses” are called for, more than one shook his tail,
My second “Brown Brandy,” His Lordship’s “Pale Ale!”

Back to Winslow, the Spinney we then went to draw,
I’ll tell all that followed, and all that I saw;
Such a beautiful home for poor Reynard to dwell in,
Such echo I hear, from Simpson’s voice swelling;
A whimper, a challenge,—“Yooi! have at him!” I hear—
’Twas a three-legged fox, and they chopp’d him—“Oh! dear.”

Poor Simpson looked frightened, Lord Southampton astounded,
That *traps* to catch foxes, in THIS COUNTRY abounded !

'Twas a sorry " Who-oo ! "—Fitz Oldacre gave it !—

The hounds ate the fox, and there I must *lave* it !

'Twas now three o'clock, but to show sport determined,

My Lord took his pack to Pilch Cover and found him ;

They ran him six miles, such a clipping good burst,

" Poor Pug " just in time to reach his home first—

Safe ! Now for our own homes,—bother the " Rails,"—

Believe me to be, out of place, very faithfully yours.

(PART PROPRIETOR) AND LATE HUNTSMAN TO THE MANGEY
TAILS !

Master is gone abroad.

I said one day to Dick " You have a good pack out." He replied " Yes, sir, there is not a hound which will not do her part, and there is not one that can beat the leading hounds two lengths. It is the head of the pack, sir, that is responsible for all the checks. If my lord sees a hound four lengths before the leading hounds for any distance, that hound has to go ; you must have your chase-hounds steady."

At the end of the season Simpson left and returned to his farm ; but he was not destined to enjoy himself in his own way for long, as Lord Henry Bentinck sought him out and offered him the largest salary that ever was heard of. He hunted the Burton until he got farm-sick again, then ended his most prosperous career

as a huntsman. Bob Ward and Simpson were great friends. It happened that the former had a bad fall and was unable to hunt, and Dick packed up his bag, and went and hunted the "Hertfordshire" until Bob recovered.

CHAPTER VI.

GEORGE BEERS, HUNTSMAN.

AFTER Dick Simpson left Lord Southampton kept the same whippers-in, and took his old servant George Beers back from the Oakley, Mr. Arkwright taking the horn there and hunting most successfully for many years. Beers felt quite at home again at Whittlebury, and remained to the end of his lordship's reign.

About the third day in cub-hunting the hounds went to Stowe Ridings at five o'clock. It was very foggy but we began, found directly, ran the whole length of those beautiful coverts and crossed over to the other side. There was no doubt about what the bitches were going to do provided the fox would only keep above ground. When Reynard reached the top again he went straight across the grass fields at Luffield Abbey. This made matters worse, as hounds went like a flock of pigeons, entered the new park at Whittle-



GEORGE BEERS.

bury, swung him round that into the garden at the mansion, and killed him under the dining-room windows. "Fetch him out, George," I said; "I believe my lord is at home." In a minute I knew he was, and saw my lady also, one peeping out on each side of the bedroom window blind. George threw the fox up on to the lawn. We went and killed another and were home at eight o'clock.

Lord Southampton said: 'His hounds would not let him have his sleep out!'

Beers was delighted with the Vale, and had very good sport. There were some hard men out with us: Mr. William Levi, Mr. Duncan, Jem Mason settled there; Mr. Henry Pike, George Price, Mowbray Morris, Poole Ward, and others, with Mr. Henry Poole, of Saville Row, who made Jem as smart as you please with his hunting coats. It took several men to dress Jem; one made the feet of his boots, another the legs, and a third the tops! no one could grudge him anything because he did everything justice.

Mrs. Villiers was one of the most popular ladies of those days on account of her rank, her riding, and noble character. Her husband died a young man, and things in the shape of

bills were not settled. She went abroad and, no one heard anything of her until she had saved enough to pay all. She then went to Melton, paid everyone, and made such an impression there that the next time it was known that she was returning thither they rang the church bells! This good lady had been troubled to find a good pilot, so Jem Mason showed her the way in the best of form, a most popular action on his part.

It would be only travelling over the same ground to recount the runs in the Vale, so I will write of what Lord Southampton had been doing. He had dressed me down pretty much, and one day, by way of making amends, he said to me :

“Take my horn!” I replied “It is of no use to me, my lord, I can’t blow it!”

We had famous sport on the Whistley side, Mr. Webb senior, Mr. Drake, Mr. Hervie Farquhar, and others before mentioned had been very constant in attendance. We had a fine run from Whistley to Thenford and killed ; Mr. Webb was riding a favourite horse named Liberty. “Are you sending the old horse home?” I asked. “Yes,” he replied, “he cannot stand two wet shirts in one day.”

In the month of March we had a very heavy fall of snow without frost. Then came a gale from the north and blew all the snow off the land into the hedges; the wind then turned into the south-west and a rapid thaw began. I took the chance, and went to Astwell Mill and found master and pack at the meet. My lord asked me if it would do. I, of course, said "Yes." Will Derry was once asked the same question on a hard morning; his reply was, "I see no danger whatsomedever!"

"But how about this snow?" his lordship anxiously inquired. "We must keep out of that," I said emphatically.

Lord Southampton had a friend with him who he was anxious should see his hounds.

"I should hunt certainly," I said, "and go to Allithorn; if the hounds beat us we must find them and go home."

We went, and I was thinking I had made myself responsible, and should 'catch it' if things went wrong. We drew the covert straight up wind, found at the top end and away hounds went; no mistake about it I could see. They ran up wind leaving Sulgrave on the right, pointing for Thenford, a good mile ahead of me. I had the good luck to see the hounds turn in the distance. Thinking that the fox would make another bend

and come down to me I turned, for which there were two reasons: one was that they would very likely sink the wind, and the other that there was a good track without jumping. Every hound could be heard, the 'young ladies' were singing away at the head, and the Furrier blood beating time—such a cry! They were then pointing for Steane Park, but as luck would have it they turned again and came down to me; then going straight again, leaving Radstone on the left, up to Bartlett's long covert, through the bottom end and down to Brackley turnpike pointing for Whitfield Coppice. I began to think I ought to see the fox, but could not do so as he made for a long covert on the opposite hill, Turweston Furze. It occurred to me that if I could reach the end of that he ought to be visible. I was there as soon as might be, but the hounds were in the grass lane at the top; they had run the rackway and riding all the way and out at the gate, when they hit the line through the hedge. Looking forward about three-quarters of the way down the field—a long one—I saw the fox "done to a turn." I jumped the hedge, and on looking again he was not to be seen. Down this fallow field the pack ran; when they neared the place where I had seen the fox they checked.

I stood still, and in a minute heard a voice saying in angry tones :—

“ If you would stay at home I could catch a fox ! it is impossible when you are out.”

Turning in the saddle I said, “ My lord, I saw the fox dead tired, just here,” turning again and pointing and looking to the spot ; there lay ‘ Master Charles,’ the sun shining upon him, he looked beautiful ! I went on, “ my lord, we shall kill this fox.”

“ Yes,” his lordship rejoined, “ if anyone can say a disagreeable thing, it is yourself.”

“ I am sure we shall catch him,” I emphatically replied.

“ Hold your tongue, do !” was the sharp rejoinder.

This did not tend to mend matters, but as his lordship came nearer, I said, “ What do you think of *this*, my lord ?” showing him the fox.

“ Oh dear,” he exclaimed, quite taken aback, “ what shall I do ? ”

“ Stand still, my lord,” was all my reply.

“ They will never catch him !” his lordship cried excitedly.

“ Pray stand still, my lord,” I entreated, adding reassuringly, “ they will find him.”

While this conversation was passing the hounds

had gone along the fence at the bottom of the field, and turned up the other side, still keeping by the fence, until they arrived opposite the place where they had checked. They had spread themselves in a perfect line about a yard apart, and were then coming straight for us with every nose down; they might well have been compared to a wave on the seashore; the fox did not rise, and in a second he was lost to view under a heap of hounds which could have been covered with a cast-net.

There was a study for a huntsman ! particularly for one who thinks it his business to interfere with hounds.

As a south-west wind blew across the line, the hounds ran the scent about twenty feet from the line the fox had travelled. How often have I heard huntsmen say, "He must have dropped into the earth," when in all probability he has only lain down. A tired fox will not get up unless he is obliged to do so.

Bob came up and gave the fox to the hounds. All troubles ceased, and I had to tell my lord where they had gone during a very pleasant ride home. I inquired where the friend was. "Oh!" answered his lordship, "the last I heard of him, he was in a snowdrift!"

This fox was killed in the corner field of Oxfordshire, joining Northamptonshire on the north, and Buckinghamshire on the east side. Lord Southampton often surprised his huntsman by appearing unexpectedly.

His lordship possessed an extraordinary facility for getting to the end of a run without much jumping. He rode rather small horses for a sixteen stone man ; knowing the country thoroughly, and being such a good judge of what hounds were doing, he seemed to see everything that passed.

Up to this time one hundred couples of hounds had been bought. An advertisement appeared in 1850 in *Bell's Life* that the Badminton pack was to be reduced. Of these hounds Lord Southampton bought, I believe, thirty-three couples. Beers brought them into condition with the pack, and took them cub-hunting. They did not please George at all. He was asked by his master what he thought of them. His reply was 'that they were of no use in the woods, and he did not think they were any good in the open.' Of course, this was a great disappointment to the purchaser. It was, therefore, decided to send them out alone, to see if they could catch a fox. I was asked to go with them ; the result was, however, very

discouraging. Beers made his report, my lord said he would send for Will Long to come and catch a fox with them; but nothing would move our huntsman. It ended in seven and a half couples being kept, and the others sent away. There was amongst them one of the best-looking hounds I ever saw, a beautifully-coloured dog named Posthumous. This hound thought his part was to "do the ornamental," so he used never to leave the huntsman; he was a three-season hunter. Where there is a pack of hounds which is to be carried on the owners do not part with anything for its good deeds.

Things settled down, and sport was enjoyed when there was any opportunity of obtaining it. Lord Southampton was most successful on the north side of the country. There was a very fine run from Charwelton leaving Byfield on the left, on to Boddington, also on the left, and over Priors Marston field up to Shuckborough; hounds ran very hard and there was much 'grief,' but the fox was killed handsomely. Mr. Knightley and Mr. George Hitchcock had a great set-to. Lord Southampton gave the latter the brush.

Towards the end of the season Lord Southampton said he should like to have a day in Whittlebury Forest with the dog hounds, and

asked me if I thought he could catch a fox. I replied :

“No doubt you can, my lord, with a good scent; Beers has given the foxes in the forest such a drilling, and such a thinning, that they will run for their lives.”

His lordship enquired where he should begin; I suggested Porter's Wood, about a mile from the large coverts, adding, “They will open the fox's mouth if they can get away with him, he will then run the plains and the rides.” The forest was then nearly double its present size.

The fixture was Whittlebury Green. It was a perfect hunting morning as luck would have it, and the hounds were taken to Porter's Wood. A fox was found and ran rather well round the wood and out at the top towards Whittlebury; he was an enormous old fox, the hounds did just what I wanted them to do; they raced over three fields and across the centre of Sholebrook Lawn, into the jungle, where, having no peace allowed him, he took to the rides and plains.

His lordship was very happy! I was glad to see such a good prospect, knowing well what would happen if we did not succeed. On we went, no sign of a check, and we made a seven-mile point and reached the outside of the

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forest at Shroob near Stony Stratford. Instead of going away he turned right-handed into the Hanger division of the forest, and on hounds raced in gallant style through some splendid ridings, first-rate places in which to see dog hounds carry a good head. Our horses were going none the better now, and I thought that the hounds would beat us. As they were racing up a beautiful riding we came to a cross-riding; a couple and a half went straight on. I said, "Forward, my lord, this is right," but he turned, and into a thicket his lot went; I went on with the leading hounds. They were three of the best chase-hounds we had, and well matched in pace too, that is the beauty of chase-hounds. They made a turn and we went into another ride like a race-course, there I saw the fox sinking to nothing; the hounds ran up to him as if he were standing still, and rolled him over in the middle of the riding.

I believe the fox was blind. I dismounted and picked him up; luckily my mare was crying "bellows to mend" or she would not have carried him. I have handled as many foxes as most people but never carried such a heavy one. Going back with him, I found his lordship still in the thicket with a fresh fox, and riding up I said:

"Here is your fox, my lord!" exhibiting him.

“My hounds shan’t eat him!” he exclaimed testily.

“Well, my lord, I won’t,” I laughingly replied; and I threw him down against his horse’s head, and stood back. In a few seconds the horn was blown, and the hounds came and ate him up. We then went home, and on the way his lordship curiously enquired, “Why did you think those hounds were right?” I replied “Because they always ran at head, and had done so all the time, and for that reason I followed them.”

His lordship’s comment was, “I wish I had done so, the thing would have been more complete.” “Well,” he added, “I must say Beers has made the dog hounds as near perfect as possible.”

Looking back to the period of which I am now writing, many changes were taking place. Good men had passed away, and their successors were following on in the support of the hunt. Messrs. Aris of Adstone, and Aris junior of Oakley Bank, Mr. John Aris of Weedon, Mr. William Amos of Charlock, the Bartletts of Halse, Mr. Pike of Haversham, Messrs. Edward Roper, John Smith of Quinton, Joseph Whitton and his brother John, Mr. Tom Dunkley of Kislingbury, and

many other farmers—whom, I consider, are the backbone of the hunt—had now settled down as foxhunters and fox-preservers over a good span of country. Young men are very useful in taking off the binders or the top-rail.

Many more gentlemen whose names are too numerous to mention had joined the hunt. Mr. Harry Lightfoot was a very fine horseman, and a good-looking man, with such a fine pair of black whiskers! he was a general favourite, particularly with the ladies. One morning he appeared at the meet minus his whiskers.

“What on earth have you been doing?” I exclaimed aghast.

“Well,” he ruefully replied, “last night some of my friends were chaffing me about the whiskers, and said I was very proud of them. I denied it, and said I would sell them for very little; the bargain was struck and scissors produced; they cut off one side, and left me the extreme mortification of cutting off the other myself. I only got a ‘fiver’ for them, I would give ten ‘fivers’ for them now!!”

One morning Lord Southampton brought an indictment to which Lightfoot and I were the defendants. My lord began:

“I wonder what I shall hear next?” He then

proceeded to charge us with having ridden over the pack. In our defence I said :

"I wish your lordship had witnessed what occurred, I am sure you would not then blame us. The hounds had all gone out of the field to our right, and we had to jump about ten yards apart, a very high thorny hedge, when in the air we saw hounds running along a path under our horses ; but we did not touch one. The fox had been headed and turned towards us, and we could not see them sooner." Upon this we were acquitted with a caution. A more sensible or reasonable man than Lord Southampton never lived.

A short time before we had killed a fox in Blakesley Field, and a young farm-pupil's horse kicked a hound and killed him. I was sorry for the young fellow, and went at once to my lord, who had moved on, and said apologetically :

"We have had a bad job happen, my lord."

"What's the matter?" he enquired.

"A young man's horse has kicked Bluecap, and killed him!"

"The best hound we have!" his lordship sorrowfully exclaimed.

"It is, my lord, and the young man dare not himself come to tell what he had done." The only

further comment was, "I daresay he will be sorry enough, so I shall not say anything to him; it was my fault for not taking the hounds away sooner. As a caution, let me add that I have known three hounds killed in that way."

The last purchase of hounds not being a success another lot was bought, containing twenty-nine couples, from Yorkshire. Beers was sent for them, and brought them by rail; when they arrived at the station two couples were found to be worried, and during the first night at the kennels, the same fate befell one and a half couple more. Notwithstanding these losses it was a very useful lot, and there were some famous hounds in it.

Bob Ward was now leaving to go to Mr. J. Gerard Leigh of Luton Hoo. Tom Carr was promoted to be first whipper-in, in which capacity he was a success.

Lord Southampton did not hunt so regularly as before, consequently Beers did more in the open. He found and killed the first fox from Woodford New Covert; it was a ring, and a good one. No one went better than George on a lovely chesnut horse. The hounds passed Byfield on the right, also the reservoir, bore to the right over Priors Marston, round Catesby, and to the right of Shuckborough; still bearing right-handed over

Hellidon field, on over Charwelton Hill, and killed the fox about two fields from the covert, in fifty minutes without a check. This was a very good beginning from a very successful covert.

During this season Beers gave us perhaps the most severe chase I ever rode in that country. Finding our fox in a little osier-bed near Charwelton we ran the flat up to Ganderton's, and on to Louseland through the spinney, and followed the little brook on the left side down the valley, and killed the fox under Woodend. The 'ladies' never checked and we scarcely opened a gate all the way; and if any of my readers doubt that being a severe line I should like them to try it.

Sport was now reduced to a certainty when opportunity offered. During this season I had heard much said about Mr. Baker's hounds in North Warwickshire. Several of that pack were bloodhound colour, and being very anxious to see them, I put a hunter on the train and went down to Dunchurch. Peter Collison was huntsman, and he had a very nice pack of bitches out, two couples of the dark colour. The country was strange to me, but they called the covert Bunker's Hill. We found and ran to ground in five minutes, a dog bolted the fox and away hounds went in view. The fox was soon out of sight, and the hounds

settled, without, as is often the case, staring about. They ran steadily, and hunted the line famously over some arable fields, until, getting on the grass, they could press their fox. I cannot say where we went any more than that I was told we did a good piece of Barby Parish and wheeled round right-handed, Peter going nicely with no other occupation but to ride; and what with water and ox-fences he was fully occupied, and in forty-five minutes the fox was in view and Peter had handled him. In my humble opinion the pack behaved admirably and Peter was a genius.

Good sport in the Vale drew large fields—Sir Hugh (afterwards Lord) Cairns, Mr. Poole Ward, Mr. Watson, who afterwards hunted from Lubbenham, and was a very fine rider, Jem Mason also going to the front with Mrs. Villiers. On the Friday side of the hunt we were meeting good sportsmen.

Two very fine characters, Mr. Webb and Mr. Harrison, passed away about this time. I forget the dates of their deaths, but remember well, in a very good run which Lord Southampton had from Kingthorn Wood killing the fox at Kislingbury, that Mr. Webb falling into Bugbrook Brook, became very wet, and had to ride twenty miles to reach home. I do not remember seeing him out

again, and later on heard that he was very ill. He sent for me to go and see him ; I called in Arlington Street for that purpose, and found him very weak but cheery. "How are you?" he asked. "Glad you're come, the only wonder is that I am living to see you." I remained as long as was good for him, and then bid a last farewell to one of the finest sportsmen of his day.

A man of superior mental attainments, and brilliant in conversation, it was a treat to talk to—and a pleasure to ride over a country with him. From his great experience and ability he was an authority upon hunting and everything pertaining thereto. Mr. Jack Webb, his son, had predeceased him. He was the father of Lady Valentia.

Mr. Webb gave his favourite mare Cat's-meat to a farmer, Mr. Sirett of Stratton Audley, for a brood mare. To use his favourite simile for being clever, "She could talk French and clean knives!"

Mr. Harrison, Mr. Webb's great friend, was another ardent supporter of the Bicester Hunt, and was equally popular; a fine rider to hounds, and I never saw a man with better hands. At his death his mantle and estate fell to the present worthy Squire of Shelswell.

Early in 1860 Frank Beers came home from Russian-Poland, and was put on first whipper-in at once. On the 15th of March Lord Southampton thought he would try to catch a fox with the dog hounds in the Vale. The meet was Mursley, High Havens the draw. A number of foxes were found, the result being much ringing about; but my lord would persevere, and spent two hours in doing nothing. We went back to the covert, found again, and with a better scent took the fox a ring round Cubbington and back, leaving the covert on the left, over Stukeley field, Mursley, down to Newton, past Mrs. Villiers' gorse at a rare pace, leaving Salden Wood on the left, and straight down to the Chase at the Bletchley end. His lordship came down the road, only four people being with the hounds. The late Colonel Archibald Douglas-Pennant and Frank Beers had gone steadily and well all the time.

Lord Southampton came to me and with evident annoyance said: "I would have given a thousand pounds to catch this fox." "Well, my lord, you may catch him yet," I answered.

"Yes, I thought you would say something clever," was his characteristic reply.

I simply said, "I will go on, if I halloo you come."

Reaching a point from which a long view up a riding was obtainable, I saw the fox dead beat. I halloo'd, and the hounds were very soon with me. "Where did you see him?" his lordship asked. I showed him the place.

"How could you tell so far off?" he gruffly enquired.

"Go on, please, my lord," I replied, "and blow me up afterwards."

I guarded heel-way and he went on; the hounds hit on the scent, ran through the covert, out into the fields, and killed the fox in style. "You did that well," his lordship said, in a tone of genuine pleasure. I made much of that, as it was the only time he praised me in his life. "Give Mrs. Pilgrim the brush, if you please?" I asked. "Oh, certainly! she deserves it," was the ready response.

From that time, on account of Lady Southampton's illness and subsequent death, Lord Southampton hunted very little.

Shortly afterwards I had a day with Mr. Tailby in Leicestershire. The fixture was Gumley, and Jack Goddard was huntsman. The first fox did nothing but ring about the hills; I never liked an undulating country for hunting. Jem Mason and Frank Gordon were out, and there was always

rivalry between those two. With a fox from "Jane Ball" there was a good scent, and hounds ran very hard indeed for thirty-five minutes. There was plenty of room for the ambitious, and when it came to a pinch Mr. Tailby showed what he was made of, and very good form too. Just as the fox ought to have been overhauled Jack made a bad cast and lost him. It struck me that he did not shine so brightly in the office of huntsman as he did in that of whipper-in to Jem Hills. He was a fine horseman—a nice fellow too ; but these qualities do not constitute a fox-catcher.

In the autumn of 1860 the first Lady Southampton died. The hounds were stopped for a proper period ; after which Beers, in the Master's absence, hunted them in his usual form, his son Frank whipping in. Mr. Lowndes then took the upper country back again, sport still flourishing in the northern part of the hunt.

One very good run George had from Stowe Wood. A run hard to beat. It was a frosty morning, but not hard enough to stop hounds ; there was a very large Field out, including Lord Spencer and many other hard-riding men who lost a fine run through not paying attention to the hounds. The fox went away at the Everdon corner, bore to the right over Weedon Hill, over the

Weedon and Everdon road down to the brook, and ran that beautiful vale with Everdon village on the left and Newnham on the right. Hounds passed Badby Wood in the valley beneath, nearly touching it, and ran straight to Badby House, through the plantation, leaving Staverton Wood to the left, and over the Turnpike, all without a check. We thought then that the fox meant Braunston Gorse, but the bitches ran into him a field before he could reach it. Only four people away, the Field all left behind; and I never saw such a number of crestfallen people as we met on our way back to Weedon.

Frank Beers learned lessons from his father which he never forgot. George Beers had three pupils of whom he was justly proud—Mr. Arkwright, Charles Payn, and his own son Frank; and they freely acknowledged that they owed more to his teaching than they could express.

Lord Southampton always said of Beers that he had but one fault, namely his hasty temper. During all the time I knew him he never missed a single day's hunting from ill-health or accident; he was a most determined man, possessed of great power and strong nerve. He only spoke in a cross tone to me once in his life; that was on the occasion of his getting a rabbit-hole fall by my

side. I caught his horse and asked him if he was hurt. He burst out with "Ask a fellow if he is hurt after a fall like that! How could he help being hurt!!" He went grumbling away, but I could not find out that there was any injury beyond the temper.

Beers always thought very highly of the Osbaldeston Furrier blood, and he left many of the sort in the pack, twenty couples at least, most of them from that capital dog Marquis. Lord Southampton had this dog's portrait painted, and gave Beers the picture, and also the portrait of a noted hound his Lordship had in Leicestershire, named Hazard, bred by the Marquis of Tavistock. Marquis was a very savage hound at a drain or at the death of a fox. I once had to stand in my own defence and hit him to keep him off me; this he never forgot nor forgave and he ever after set his bristles up at me. Whenever I went into the kennel Beers used to say, "Put that old dog away or we shall have no peace."

The last season was a good one; we had many strangers out and gave them plenty of sport.

On one occasion a fox was found near Grub's Coppice, and ran a good line, leaving Cold Higham to the left, over the turnpike road Caldecote field and Tiffeld, Shoseley Ground,

over Shutlanger field—which stopped the horses—and ran to ground near Stoke. Lord Spencer was out, Mr. Edward Burton went well that day, and so did some others whose names I forget.

I now arrive at the period when our noble Master had decided to give up the hounds—after twenty years' mastership. His lordship had hunted the pack entirely at his own cost without a subscription of any kind. Keepers and earth-stoppers were all paid by him in the most liberal manner. He was a good customer to the farmers, buying many horses and much provender. I heard him ask one old gentleman, who did not hunt, if he had threshed his oats. "No, my lord, but I soon shall," was the reply. "Very well, let me know and I will ride over and buy them." Not a bad way, this, to keep things pleasant in a country! Happily, after his lordship's resignation there was a good time in store.

Lord Southampton became the father of a family of fine children, and kept in touch with his neighbours and friends in local and county business. Nothing could exceed the kindness and support he received from the owners of land throughout the hunt. The farmers and fox preservers regretted the loss of the noble lord, but when

the time for his retirement came they were, to a man, rejoiced that the hounds were to continue in the FitzRoy family, and transferred their support to his Grace the fifth Duke of Grafton and the Earl of Euston in May, 1862.

Lord Southampton sold the whole pack to the late Mr. Selby-Lowndes, of Whaddon Hall. The dog hounds were sent by that gentleman to Tattersall's and were sold by auction, four couples of them returning to the old country to keep the Furrier blood in the kennel.

The Duke appointed Frank Beers to be huntsman, and the country was without hounds until the late Lord Penrhyn came to the rescue and telegraphed to his friend Sir John Johnson, "Buy Hill's hounds!" Sir John acted accordingly, and Lord Penrhyn wrote to the Duke begging his Grace's acceptance of the hounds. The Duke readily accepted this handsome offer on behalf of the country. With these four couples above-mentioned, and some young hounds from Mr. Drake's, the pack was formed, and the present pack at Paulerspury is descended from them.

Through the kindness of the present Lord Southampton I am able, at the eleventh hour, to include two additional illustrations, which cannot fail to



“HAZARD.”

possess great interest for the readers of this book. They are portraits of two of the most famous hounds possessed by the late Lord Southampton during the time his lordship hunted the Quorn and Grafton countries. As they were hounds of great merit in the field, and of such famous strains of breeding, such memories as the elapse of time permit me to gather up regarding them may be interesting to some of my readers. The portraits are taken from original pictures, painted for the late Lord Southampton, and by him given to George Beers during the time the latter hunted the Grafton pack at Whittlebury. Beers was also whipping-in at Quorn during Hazard's hunting career at Melton.

The present Lord Southampton was very pleased to obtain these two pictures by purchase, and of course he greatly prizes them on his father's account.

HAZARD.—This noble hound was bred by the Marquis of Tavistock, and was entered in the Oakley country the season before the hounds were sold to Lord Southampton, and he went with G. Mumford as huntsman and G. Beers as second whip.

When Lord Southampton retired from the Quorn, he sold the pack to Sir Harry Goodrick,

but kept the hound Hazard, and sent him as a pensioner to Whittlebury, to run in the stable-yard for the remainder of his life. Tom Winfield took advantage of the opportunity and bred a famous hound from him in Hector.

In 1842, when Lord Southampton took the Grafton, he lost no time in getting the favourite blood into his kennel through Hector.

Hazard, Hannibal, Herald, and Herdsman were worthy descendants of their noted predecessor, although they were not fashionable colours, being black and white.

Herald had a very large blemish on his back, the result of a scald, caused by a careless servant throwing hot water upon him.

Herdsman was the most amusing hound in kennel: if you showed him the whip he would, in perfect good humour, seize the lash and try his best to take it away, which used greatly to please George Beers, who thought very highly of all the sort because they did not mind scratching their faces. He would enlarge on the qualities of Hazard, and would declare that a better foxhound never crossed Leicestershire.

MARQUIS.—This famous hound was a son of Belvoir Guider from Magic, which bitch was a daughter of Singwell, one of the white litter



"MARQUIS."

by Merriman, the crack Furrier dog which is described in my account of the pack which was bought of Mr. Harvey Coombe.

Lord Southampton and his huntsman were so fond of the "Furriers" that the kennel became very well stocked with the breed, of which the most perfect hound was this Marquis.

Marquis was fawn and white in colour, faultless in shape, and perfect in work, but of a very morose nature—surly and disagreeable in the kennel, and never forgave anyone a real or fancied injury.

The note of the "Furriers" was charming, and was a source of keen delight to men who hunted with the pack.

When Frank Beers was huntsman he was quite alive to the good qualities of the breed, and bought Marmion and Merlin at Tattersall's in order to retain the sort. Monitor was, I believe, kept by Mr. Lowndes for the same purpose. There were twenty-two and a half couples in Lord Southampton's pack of that family, and it has never fallen to my lot to see a pack superior to it, of course, I must add—in my humble opinion.

Frank Beers availed himself of the opportunity of crossing with Mr. Hill's hounds, and the favourite sort, and was most successful. Many

a time have I heard him cheer and say, "Hark to the Marquis blood!"

Marmion was an especial favourite of Frank's; he kept him longer than any hound he hunted, even until he was a ten-season hunter, though he could not run up. He kept Marmion, Minstrel, and Rescue to an unusual age, and used to take them cub-hunting, because they were all so good in finding a cub which had lain down or got into the deep ditches in the woods.

After a long pause there was no greater treat than to hear Frank cheer to the echo when one of these old hounds spoke, and finish with "Marquis blood" again.

Marmion was the colour of Marquis, and, to use Frank's words, he was "made as a hound should be," but none too straight; which Mr. Lowndes did not mind, but it was not approved of by others. Marmion was just the reverse in disposition to his father, being most amiable. He was allowed the privilege of leaving the pack to come and share my lunch. If I held my sandwiches up, he was always on the look out, and would come to me. A 'whip' spoke to him one day, but Frank said, "You let him alone, he will come back."

It is very remarkable how voice and colour is

perpetuated in families of hounds ; after a lapse of more than twenty-five years a bitch called Sanity came black and white, and half-faced, exactly the colour of Merriman, and possessing all the good qualities of the breed. Her voice was exactly like that of Magic, the daughter of Marquis.

This bitch was walked when a puppy, by Mr. Roper, of Blisworth.

There is a good deal of the old sort in the Grafton kennels now, which accounts in a great measure for their good noses. I never saw a skirter, or a headstrong, runaway hound of that breed. They were very hard workers, and would stop and turn with the scent, always letting it be known where they were when running.

I always had the idea that a good "cry" after a fox made him go straight. Many times I have said to George Beers, and to his son, when well away over a country, "Give him a blow!" the sound of a horn is well known by an old fox.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRST BARON PENRHYN.

THE first Lord Penrhyn had resided at Wicken Park in the county of Buckingham, for hunting, for some years previous to the circumstance related in the last chapter of his buying Mr. Hill's hounds, by which generous act he did all a good turn in setting the ball rolling. A nobleman is sure to be popular in any country if he is generous and helps his neighbours. His lordship was a clever man, and exercised his talents, as well as spending his money, for the benefit of others.

In those days Shorthorn breeding was an expensive luxury, and high-bred cattle commanded fabulous prices. It was difficult for tenant farmers to obtain superior blood at a reasonable price. Lord Penrhyn was a breeder of Shorthorns on a large scale, as also of Welsh cattle, and his herds of these were very extensive. Thinking, or I may rather say knowing, that Shorthorns were "all the



EDWARD GORDON DOUGLAS-PENNANT.

First Baron Penrhyn.

From a photograph by Maull and Fox, 1872, Piccadilly, W.

go" in the neighbourhood of Wicken, his lordship held occasional sales of young sires, bred from the best bulls that were to be had. A noted bull named Marmaduke was bought at an enormous price, and proved to be the greatest success. These sales were attended by many farmers; there was a welcome and a good luncheon for all comers, and there are many persons still living who speak in the highest terms of the benefit conferred upon them. I may relate the following incident in order to show the effect of his lordship's kind efforts, and how great was the favour he rendered.

At one of the sales I was talking to the noble lord when a large breeder came up, and, addressing his lordship, said :

"If you are going to sell such animals as these at the price we may as well give up, it will ruin us."

"You may do as you please," was the reply ;
"I am only too glad that the farmers come and buy the cattle, and I hope it will be the means of doing good, by improving their herds."

That is the style of thing that binds farming and fox-hunting together as with a golden cord !

Lord Penrhyn hunted for many years from Wicken, and his two sons were there entered to hounds.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SIXTH DUKE OF GRAFTON, M.F.H.

IN the year 1863 the fifth Duke of Grafton died, and was succeeded by the sixth Duke in the title and estates, as also in the mastership of the hounds. His Grace hunted the country until 1882 with the greatest success, advertising three days a week only, but occasionally having a bye-day, and allowing his huntsman to give the hounds strong work in the forest in order to keep the large number of which the pack consisted in good condition. Frank Beers has, now and then, gone out into the forest and killed a fox before going to the regular fixture.

His Grace was a kind and liberal landlord, following, in that respect, in the footsteps of his ancestors, and carrying into practical realisation the principle that property has its duties as well as its rights and privileges.



WILLIAM HENRY.
Sixth Duke of Grafton.

In hunting matters the Duke adhered to the system adopted by his grandfather; he was a great buyer of horses in his own country, and became the possessor of a stud which was second to none. Horse breeding was encouraged by the best of blood being placed at the service of the farmers at Wakefield. Some of the elders of the hunt used to hope that his Grace would resume the old livery, but the Duke said 'he preferred the scarlet and did not care to go back to the green.'

The hounds and horses, by the kindness of Lord Southampton, found accommodation at Whittlebury for the first season under the sixth Duke of Grafton's mastership, whilst the new kennels on Wakefield Lawn were being built. His Grace was always held in high esteem by the farmers, who greatly appreciated his liberality in distributing game amongst them. The giving of prizes for the best puppies walked by the farmers was instituted by this Duke.

CHAPTER IX.

FRANK BEERS, HUNTSMAN.

FRANK BEERS was about twenty-six years of age when he was appointed huntsman. I had known him from the time when he was a boy of twelve years of age, having first seen him riding on a pony in the Chase, with the Oakley, to which pack his father was then huntsman. He was soon after in top boots and scarlet, riding second horse. Frank went to Lord Yarborough as under whipper-in to William Smith, until there was a change to Tom Smith, a brother. He could not have been more than twenty-one years old when Mr. Oldacre engaged him to go to Russian-Poland to take a pack of hounds, and hunt the wolf for a foreign Count. He remained there until the war broke out, when all foreigners were sent home. Frank much regretted the change, and it was several years before he became reconciled.

The hounds were kept at Whittlebury, until the new kennels were built. It was a great ordeal for so young a man to take the horn with a new pack. The trial was so great to a sensitive mind, that I thought for a long time he would give it up. On the third day on which Beers hunted his first whipper-in had a fall, and, happening at a time when he was not in good health, inflammation set in and he died. A young huntsman is sure, if he be good for anything, to be anxious. Beckford never said a truer thing than that "A huntsman must be a genius." There are people who think that if a man can ride, halloo, and blow a horn, he is perfect; and really that huntsmen are heaven-born. Upon the same principle, I suppose, they would take a young man, just called to the bar, and make a judge of him! There is a certain amount of experience required, and a routine to be gone through, which, combined with science and intelligence, conduce to make a huntsman.

Frank Beers had hunted wolves, which are found in the valleys, and run straight for the hills. The change to a fox of course bothered him. However, he was fairly successful through cub-hunting; but when he went into the open things did not go very smoothly. The old

hounds hung on the line, and the young ones went beyond it. He made a great deal too much use of the horn, and was sorely crabbed by the gentlemen. However, he stuck to it like a man, and had the good sense to recognise his failings, so that after Christmas matters mended a little, still, as yet they were unable to do much; but the pack was improving rapidly, and Beers was then able to hunt without the old hounds which hung on the line.

When Parliament met Sir John Johnson always brought his stud and hunted in the Midlands. This season (1862-63), soon after his arrival, Sir John came to me with a very long face and said:

"I am afraid I did no good in buying Hill's hounds, but I could not help it; Lord Penrhyn having wired to me to buy them. I carried out his lordship's wishes. You have no idea how I am chaffed about it in the clubs."

I replied, "I am aware that is quite the fashion, and considered the right thing to do; but you know, Sir John, that fashions change, and I am confident that before we are much older it will be so in this instance."

"I am very pleased to hear you say so," said he. "I am sure I thought, from what I heard, that the case was hopeless."

"Put on a bold front, Sir John," I added, "and tell them that you can draw sixteen couples of as good hounds out of Hill's as can be drawn from any pack, and that they don't know what they are talking about."

In the month of February the tide turned. Sir John wore a smile, Frank began to catch his foxes well, and from that time success attended him to a marked extent.

In the entry some young hounds were bought from Mr. Drake of Belvoir blood. Destitute was one of these. During cub-hunting we had a fox in some very high turnips, higher than the hounds. I saw Destitute take a line very steadily down a path through the crop, and followed her until she turned up under a fence, then I called Frank and told him what it was, and that, although I thought it must be right, I dared not halloo. We followed her with the pack, and eventually we caught the fox.

Destitute was the best foxhound, bar none, I ever saw. Frank kept her until she died, and then he had her head stuffed, and asked Mrs. Beers never to part with it, 'for that hound,' he said, 'was the making of him.'

In the third year, Beers had the good luck to enter four couples of puppies—a wonderful entry

—from this one hound, Destitute, by Hill's Brusher; such a handsome and good litter. There was a large entry; altogether twenty-six couples were put forward, and that number has never been equalled since.

The Duke of Grafton was so anxious to secure a good pack that new milk was given *ad libitum* to the young puppies, with remarkable results. Many gentlemen visited the kennels to inspect this wonderful entry, and, amongst the rest, Mr. Foljambe, who was stone blind. Mr. Bevan introduced me to that gentleman, who said that he wanted to talk to me about Boniface, a dog which was considered to be the best of the entry. It is an old saying that "Seeing is believing, but feeling is the truth," and it was really most remarkable how correct Mr. Foljambe was in every point of the hound.

George Beers instilled into his son's mind the great necessity of cub-hunting, and taught him how to properly carry it out; he told him never to begin upon an old fox, but to stop the hounds directly if they hit on one; and when he was on a cub to make him turn as often as his whippers-in could do it, and so hold the cubs in one quarter of the covert, to ensure a "cry" to attract the young hounds.

In those days, going away in the open was strictly forbidden. I have seen hounds stopped many times in a morning, and taken back to a cub; if they are kept within a certain space, the young ones can hear the "cry" and learn to pack. No horn, no halloo, will attract a hound like the "cry."

I always considered Whistley Wood to be the best scenting covert in the Grafton Hunt, and during fifty seasons I saw the best runs from there, particularly in the early part of the time. When the Northampton and Banbury line of railway came it altered the run of the foxes in that direction.

During cub-hunting in 1864 I one day saw the hounds run in Whistley, from one fox to another, for three hours and fifteen minutes, and kill. Frank sent his whippers-in outside, and kept the foxes in; it gave them such a drilling that when the season opened they were soon off. I shall never forget Restless and Ringlet (Hill's bitches, and half-sisters), and Destitute; they had such good tongues and noses that there was no break in the work. I always thought that that morning did the young huntsman as much good as the pack.

I now have the pleasure of placing before my

readers some appropriate lines, kindly contributed by the author, Sir Herewald Wake.

A RUN FROM HALSE COPSE.

BY SIR HEREWALD WAKE.

I.

No worthier theme than hunting can a poet's soul inspire,
The stirring music of the chase shall tune my Muse's lyre ;
Men, hounds, and horses I will sing, and ever as you listen
Your pulses shall beat faster yet, your eyes with fire shall glisten.

II.

For you shall hear the story told how Reynard fate defied,
And ran a gallant race for life, how gamely Reynard died ;
For with that day's achievements all the country side resounds,
And I will sing the praises of the Duke of Grafton's hounds.

III.

At Astwell Mill the fixture was, and to that fixture came
A company of sportsmen true, and not unknown to fame.
The Duke and Lord Charles FitzRoy,* George Pennant,† too,
was there,
St. Maur,‡ with his hard-riding spouse, had come the sport to
share.

IV.

Campbell and Grosvenor,§ Byass, Bull, and Fuller to the fore,
Wake and his wife, the Wisemans, too, Robarts, and many
more ;

* Lord Charles FitzRoy now Duke of Grafton.

† George Pennant now Lord Penrhyn.

‡ St. Maur, etc., now Duke and Duchess of Somerset.

§ Grosvenor now Lord Ebury.

And all of them well mounted were on nags of bone and speed,
And well for them their horses could both leap and stay at need.

V.

Through Helmdon on to Stuchbury we wound a devious way,
The Spinneys drawing blank, alas! no fox lay there that day.
Halse* Copse in order next we drew, and every stout heart sank
When Beers' "Come, come, come away," proclaimed another
blank.

VI.

But scarce a bow-shot off from there yet one more coppice
stood—
Little Halse Copse, the cognomen of that now far-famed wood,
Which held that day so stout a fox that had but fate been kind
He might perchance have saved his brush and left us far behind.

VII.

The hounds were soon upon his drag, old Rattler feathered
high,
Then gave his deeped-tongued challenge and the others scored
to cry.
Full soon was Pug unkennelled when he heard the warning
notes,
That swift into a chorus swelled from five-and-thirty throats.

VIII.

Our fox soon showed himself to be bred of that right good sort,
Erst wont to show our ancestors such rare old-fashioned sport.
He scorned to run the covert long, but broke away in style,
And gained a well-earned start perhaps of nearly half a mile.

IX.

Beers galloped round and gave his horn a spirit-stirring twang,
The hounds streamed out of covert, then their diapason rang

* Pronounced Haws.

Both loud and deep as o'er the plough with lightning speed
they went,
And sportsmen saw with half an eye there was a burning scent.

X.

What racing and what bustling now was there to get a place,
And lucky was the aspirant whose horse could go the pace.
The hounds soon settled on the line, and then like wildfire ran ;
It now appeared to be a case of catch them if you can.

XI.

And fortunate it was that day, as well for horse as hound,
The ploughs rode light, the going good, the turf was firm and
sound,
• Or else with such a holding scent and with a fox so stout
Before the finish every nag must fain have given out.

XII.

Ten minutes' burst, and then we thought we had a check at last,
But Beers sat still and watched the hounds complete their
patient cast,
When down the fence they hit him off, the line was turning now,
The fox, no doubt, had headed been by yonder man at plough.

XIII.

A few short turns well puzzled out, they're off again at score ;
Though going fast, yet 'tis a ring, a fact we much deplore.
Halse Copse again appears which we had hoped to leave
behind,
Though thankful for the chance to give our nags a little wind.

XIV.

But with a crash the gallant pack fly o'er the opposing fence,
And still maintain their dashing speed through blackthorn
thickets dense ;

Their blood-tipped sterns a moment wave, and then they
disappear,
And the fast-receding music of their bell-like tongues we hear.

XV.

This is no time to loiter nor to think of drawing rein,
So spur we down the covert side or from the chase refrain ;
For he who took a pull that day, if but for half a minute,
To breath his horse beside the wood, was never after in it.

XVI.

For five-and-thirty minutes we'd been going well and fast,
And thought the pace was much too good a longer time to last ;
But, as it proved, a harder test for horses was in store,
Although the veriest glutton then had hardly asked for more.

XVII.

We barely reached the farther end, when, going down the wind,
We viewed our fox, who had not dwelt for all too close behind,
Beers and his beauties, swift of foot, poor Reynard stoutly push
Through brier and brake and clamouring make him tremble
for his brush.

XVIII.

The Whip's view halloo now is heard, and Beers becomes
aware
Of Reynard's course, and lifts his voice and pipes both shrill
and clear :
A louder pipe and shriller than that possessed by Beers,
Unless it be a whistle blown by steam, one never hears.

XIX.

The hounds, their tongues still throwing, dash out and by that
sign
Frank knows full well his steadfast pack has never left the line.
He cares not now to lift them, and indeed he has no need,
For as they run they try our panting horses' utmost speed.

XX.

And well for him it was just then whose nag had got some breeding,
For those on cocktails saw with grief the chase was swift receding,
And would-be thrusters urged and spurred their nags without remorse,
Until they found themselves on foot, and crying "Catch my horse."

XXI.

With dirty coats and broken hats the natty field was fleckered,
And some found to their cost that day a sportsman's life is chequered,
And not a few aspiring souls who needs must foremost be
Were scratched about the eyes and nose and chin most piteously.

XXII.

O'er ridge-and-furrow fields we flew as fast as we could go,
The whitethorn fences in the Vale uncommon hairy grow;
Nigh every fence a bullfinch is, and where the light of day
Peeps through a space most usually a lawyer stops the way.

XXIII.

Just here and there a flight of rails confers a fairer leap,
But such the pace that few can now afford to hold them cheap.
The gates are few and far between, the seeming friendly gap
As oft as not will prove a most uncompromising trap.

XXIV.

The biggest and the blackest place is often safer far
Than where the wide hiatus doth a fence's outline mar.
Although of leaping ditches wide one's hunter may be fond,
But few in an emergency can clear the darkling pond.

XXV.

Now Stuchbury's pleasant pastures lie stretched beneath our feet,
The going on those headlands sound was really quite a treat,
And well-bred horses caught their wind as swiftly on they sped,
For by a field and more than that the flying pack now led.

XXVI.

By Allithorn and Weston and over Banbury lane,
And on towards Moreton Pinkney the pace we still maintain.
A few red coats and habits and one or two in black
Are still seen popping up and down behind the fleeting pack.

XXVII.

Now on the broad and level sward we gallop while we may,
For through these verdant meads a brook, The Tovy, winds its
way.
The Tovy is both wide and deep, and should we chance to fall,
No fear but what there's room enough to hold us horse and all.

XXVIII.

Some willows mark its winding course, its rotten banks and
steep,
Keen horses prick their ears and snort, all eager for the leap ;
Now hustle horse and harden heart, cram firmly on your hat,
And straightway catch him by the head and go at it, full bat.

XXIX.

And so the first flight over swing as if 'tis in their stride,
Not so, however, those who dare or know not how to ride ;
Some take a header off their nags and much amusement yield
To those who with much caution form the rear-guard of the
field.

XXX.

Beyond some second horsemen and a farmer here and there
Who comes to show a four-year-old or exercise his mare,

And some little boys on ponies, 'tis but just I should explain,
There are not many out this day who actually crane.

XXXI.

So stiff the line had been in short the field was soon well
weeded ;
From funkens and from skitters both the chase had long
receded ;
Far back along the roads they come like bands of border
raiders
Who fly the justly angered foe and ply their cruel persuaders.

XXXII.

The Squire on wheels, his pair of roans with smoking sides
appear,
Has made his point right skilfully and now the hunt draws
near ;
He waits where we must cross the road, his chuckles are
immense
To see the ditch is deep that guards a stiff upstanding fence.

XXXIII.

Our horses blown, we looked about to choose the softest place
Where if we fell we might repose with ease if not with grace.
“ There’s nothing here to stop you,” the observant squire said,
Two nasty falls ensued, laughed he, “ from going on your head.”

XXXIV.

The hounds had now been doing all that lay within their power
Across a splendid country, mostly grass, for full an hour,
Yet captious critics, spite of that, would signally have failed
To find a fault to cavil at, for not a hound had tailed.

XXXV.

They ran so well together and they carried such a head
That almost every hound in turn appeared to take the lead.

They dwelt not at their fences and though terrible the pace,
Not less their tuneful voices they would now and then upraise.

XXXVI.

It could not last much longer, when we got upon the plough
The Pack were to their noses brought; our fox was sinking
now.

The scent began to fail a bit and though 'twas far from dull,
Most of us were uncommon glad to take a little pull.

XXXVII.

For light weights and for ladies too, **although their nags be**
blown,

'Tis possible to leap a fence or two and not come down;
But welter weights, however big their horses, must look out
Or at this juncture they would catch a purl **beyond** a doubt.

XXXVIII.

Beers who had ridden straight and well now eyes each favourite
hound,

As puzzling out the line, they gain, but slowly gain some ground,
Content at having pressed his fox, sits as a statue still,
And takes no notice of the halloo forrard on the hill.

XXXIX.

And well is he rewarded and patience wins the day,
For from the field the hounds again begin to slip away;
And if they had been lifted, 'tis likely I maintain,
They never would have settled on their fox's line again.

XL.

To Canons Ashby osier-bed we galloped fast and hard;
Nor did that holding covert much the furious hunt retard,
For Reynard when he reached it all too hot to lie in hiding,
Nor turned nor stopped but bustled through along the centre
riding.

XLI.

Then up by Canons Ashby town for half a mile or more
Our beaten fox we viewed at length still travelling on before,
Sterns down, heads up, the pack upon the line now cease to
stoop,
But course their fox, just one short turn, a snatch, and then
Whoo-hoop.

XLII.

Thus died as good and stout a fox as ever stood in front
Of fleetest hounds in England found, The Duke of Grafton's
hunt,
An hour and thirty minutes ran, his fame shall ne'er diminish,
For he was pressed, and sorely pressed, from find unto the
finish.

XLIII.

He made his point, but all too late, for on his footsteps flying
Still pressed the pack so fleet of foot; he never ceased from
trying
To shake them off; in vain he sought some refuge to discover,
And in the open did his stout pursuers roll him over.

XLIV.

His race was run, his course was done, his gallant efforts
ended,
What e'er his former life had been his death was truly splendid,
With tuneful tongue his requiem sung the pack that ran and
caught him,
And Beers will ever hug himself to hand that day he brought
him.

XLV.

When home returning from the run which so much sport
afforded,
That day's achievements I resolved should not go unrecorded,

So pass the bottle round and let each sparkling glass be filled,
boys,
Here's to the fox the Duke's dog pack at Canons Ashby killed,
boys.

During the first eight years of Frank Beers' time no diary was kept; but in 1870 he began to keep a good one, and I shall give such extracts therefrom of twenty seasons' sport as will, I feel sure, be interesting to all Grafton men, and to others who hunted there occasionally.

In the summer of 1865 our huntsman's health failed, and serious fears were entertained about him. The Duke of Grafton was so kind as to insist upon Frank's spending the winter in the Isle of Wight. George Beers was residing at Whittlebury, and the Duke placed the pack in his charge. Such good hunters were provided that George rode just as well as ever. It was a great trial to his son to leave the pack, and he took his departure very unwillingly. I promised Frank that I would stick to his father, and keep him posted up as to what they were doing. Accordingly, I hunted every day the hounds went out of the kennel during the season, and, as I knew every hound, I was able to make a fair report.

In that season we had a bob-tailed fox in the Preston coverts; this fox we ran twice, and he had

the best of it on both occasions. One day we were going to the meet at Preston, when I joined the hounds on the road I said to Beers :

"We will catch 'Mr. Bob' to-day, George, if we find him, and there is any scent."

"I don't know," he replied dubiously, "he is a 'caution.'"

"Never mind," I rejoined, "I have thought him out ; we have had two good runs with him, and then changed on to a fox with a brush, but we never hear of anyone seeing 'Bob' go back. The fact is, he runs through every covert near which the foxes lie, another fox gets up, and goes on while 'Bob' escapes."

We found 'Bob' very soon, and hounds went on good terms with him ; he visited every covert on the Fawsley estate without dwelling. The first whipper-in worked well, and the fox began to think seriously of the situation. He then ran to Hinton Gorse and going through it went up to Badby Wood ; straight down the covert and away at the bottom, pointing to, and passing Everdon on the left. The hounds ran like hares over the brook, nearly to Weedon, and turned right-handed into Stowe Wood. The huntsman and I were very lucky in getting on with them, and we were fortunate enough to meet our second horses, which was a

great relief. We then ran past Castle Dykes, through the Everdon end of the Stubbs, along the flat to Snorscombe and into Hen Wood. We were lucky again; hounds ran into Mantel's Heath, and things looked very rosy.

Going down the wood side, the covert on our right, we planned the death of 'Bob.' George was to get hold of the pack, and go down wind side of Knightley Wood—we knew it was "full of foxes," as they say—I went, no faster than I could help, up to the bridle-gate at the Farthingstone corner. In a minute the fox came away, loping over the field like a wolf, but I noticed that he was languid and leg-weary; I watched him out of the field; George and the hounds were soon at him.

"What do you think of him, master?" Beers asked me. I answered unhesitatingly: "He will never reach Seawell!" and in two fields they killed him. He lay on a bank; Beers declared that he was the stoutest fox he had killed in the Grafton country. The time was one hour and thirty minutes. I was to have the brush, which measured 3in. by 2½in.

Beers had two very good runs from Stowe-Nine-Churches in that year. The first was from the Wood to Stowe Hill. The fox ran parallel with the turnpike road to Drayson's, past Bugbrook Downs,

and on to Gayton Hill through the Allotment, and hounds ran into the fox at Dust Hill. It was a great pace to the hill at Gayton. I have noticed all my life that the Stowe Hills and the above-named are bad scenting land. The other run was down very nearly to Drayson's osiers, hounds turning up the Vale by the brook, racing the fox all the way and killing him about twenty yards inside the covert of Mantel's Heath. Mr. William Judkins rode very well in that run.

Happily, in the spring, Frank Beers returned, a new man, and was able to resume the duties of huntsman. His father, after having a season in Yorkshire, went to the Bicester, and was there taken ill. Lord North (then the Hon. W. F. J. North) took him to London for advice, and it was decided that he should not hunt again. Beers used to say that he never knew a kinder man than Lord North. During the next season all went well, and barring colds, and asthma now and then, Frank had a brilliant career.

We were out in the Green's Norton coverts, belonging to the Duke of Grafton, one morning, where we found a good show of foxes and dusted them about well, but they left the coverts, and it was contrary to orders to follow them. About ten o'clock we went away, Frank being very



FRANK BEERS.

dissatisfied at not killing a fox. I suggested that we should go and have a try near the kennels. We went, and soon found. The sun was shining, which made it hot in the wood. The fox had his mouth open and ran the rides, hounds could not go faster, and the fox was so pressed that he went into the fields, which did not improve matters; he then made for Potterspury village (I should explain that we were allowed to go into the fields near the forest) and ran down the street, where he met a man who caused him to jump through a window into a cottage. We both dismounted and went in; on the opposite side of the room there was another window, and in the garden was an old woman, holding a large tea-tray to prevent more glass damage. We had a very bad light and did not readily find the fox, but on our moving the cradle, which had been recently occupied, there he was. I pulled three old hounds in, the pack at the door baying furiously, and half the villagers had assembled outside. Hounds are very stupid on such occasions, they don't know what to do. I caught old Danger by the neck and threw him on to the fox, when a growling began; Frank jumped upon the table like a cat; he soon came down, took the fox out, and threw him amongst the people; the

children rolled about, and the women screamed. I was afraid that the hounds would bite the children, but fortunately no damage was done. The old woman complained, and the Duke went and salved her injuries; and his Grace was highly delighted with the event.

A great trouble to Frank Beers was the kennel lameness, the place was so subject to it. Everything that could be thought of was done, but without avail. The hardest-working hounds fared the worst, often when running they were taken by it and stopped to nothing; and when once seized with it they never recovered, but if they were sent to another kennel they would get quite well. Many inquiries were made as to the reason of their being sent away, because they were such good hounds.

The Duke of Grafton was very kind to his huntsman, mounting him upon the best of hunters, and during the whole time that Beers hunted the Grafton the best horses that could be found were bought for him and the whippers-in. Frank Beers was a very fine horseman, and sustained few falls over fences; his worst falls were caused by holes or uneven ground, which he failed to see while watching his hounds. He was not careful enough in choosing the path of his horse.

A good old parson lived at Cosgrove during the mastership of Lord Penrhyn who suffered very much from the depression in agriculture. Not being able to let his land, he was obliged to farm it himself. He went in for poultry to a great extent, but to add to his financial troubles the foxes ate all his fowls. He was very prompt in writing to me and giving a correct account of his losses, while I was equally prompt in paying him to the full.

Lord Penrhyn was always ready to take the hounds upon the first opportunity to relieve such cases, and they soon went to the parson's neighbourhood.

Beers drew the spinneys all down and through without a whimper. I stayed outside, thinking I might perhaps see a fox. Down an opening in the wood came a hound we called Dexter, trotting along thinking he was left behind. I noticed that he held his head up, and saw that he winded something over a wall, which he jumped. Looking over it I saw a small stack of rough faggots and the hound scratching at the bottom. Beers was blowing his horn to go away when we met at the gate; "It's all a 'hum' about this old parson and his poultry, I would never pay him another shilling!" he grumbled.

"Come here," I replied, "and see where the foxes are."

The hounds joined Dexter, and I never saw them more furious. Any number of young sportsmen were present, and they said they would soon move the stack of faggots, but the bands were so decayed that they broke in their hands. Some of them jumped on the top, and the wood being very fragile, it let them in up to their knees, and cracked so loudly that a fox bolted and jumped the wall. Every hound followed him, and out came four more foxes and jumped the wall also, giving chase to the hounds! One of the foxes soon fell a victim. Hounds went away with another, ran him for about ten minutes fast into a drain; he was bolted, and they gave him plenty of law, but excessive indulgence in the clerical poultry had rendered him short-winded, and he was killed. We drew the spinneys again, found another, and served him in the same way. Now that is my best recipe for saving the poultry fund where places are overrun with foxes.

A poor man, who was most industrious and had a large family, grew half an acre of wheat near a hedge with a grass ride up the side of it. The hunters jumped the hedge and ran on to the wheat, and for shame's sake the riders turned off at once,

damaging a portion of the corn in the shape of a crescent, treading the crop out of existence, to all appearance. I saw it and sent word to the man that he should not sustain any loss when he gathered his crop. At harvest time I asked him what he claimed. "Nothing," he said, "I wish they had done it all, I had more straw and corn too, where the horses went !"

CHAPTER X.

FRANK BEERS' DIARIES.

THROUGH the kindness of Mrs. Beers, and her family, I am enabled to offer to the public some extracts from the diaries of the late Frank Beers, which cover a period of twenty years, from 1870 to 1890. All who read them will, I have no doubt, express their surprise that so much sport could be derived from a country containing so small an area. I can vouch for the truth of it all, the writer and producer of the sport described, being a very accurate man; and the greater portion of it came under my own observation.

1870-71.

1870. Aug. 29th.—The Duke of Grafton's hounds commenced cubhunting at Waterslade. Hunted 36 days, killed 39 foxes.

“Nov. 9th.—Bucknells. Found, and went away to Lord Southampton's farm, short back to Silverstone Windmill, to the village, and to the corner of Seven

Coppices, across Luffield Abbey grounds, to Hatch Woods, but did not enter them; he ran through Crown Lands to Silverstone Village, and hounds ran him in view in at the front door of Mr. Whitlock's house (he being married only about two months), down the passage into the back kitchen, and killed him under the table. About an hour and ten minutes at best pace. Found another in Bucknells; ran him once round the wood, at a rattling pace; and killed him at Lord Southampton's farmyard, Whittlebury. Found another in Cattle Hill; hounds went at racing pace over the open, leaving Lillingstone on the right, through Leckhampstead Wood to the Village; short back through Wicken Spinneys, and on pointing for Thornton, along the meadows, over the river near Bourton Mill, through Bourton Brake, over the Winslow road, to Lenborough; stopped the hounds at Sudborough late in the afternoon. Not a whipper-in there and the horses tired, so gave it up. A most capital day's sport indeed. I rode Ensign and a cub-hunter. 26½ couples out.

"Nov. 14th.—First day of regular hunting. Preston Capes. Found in Church Wood, away to Hogstaff, back to Ganderton, on to Fawsley, and killed the fox in the Churchyard. Found again in Little Preston Wood, ran him to Seawell Wood and lost him. Drew Grub's Coppice, Ayers's Gorse, and Astcote Thorns blank. Found in Kingthorn Wood, had a very nice ring by Bradden Ponds to Slapton, back to Greens Norton, on nearly to Grub's Coppice; stopped the hounds when it was nearly dark; a pouring wet day. I rode Rataplan and Brocklesby. 20 couples bitches.

"Nov. 23rd.—Tile House. Tile House Wood blank. Found in Stratford Hill Wood, away pointing for Shalstone Spinneys; to the right across Mr. Charles

Higgins's farm, Dadford Village on the right, Stowe Ridings on the left, through the corner of Stowe Park, Tile House Wood, and away to Lillingstone Lovell, Lillingstone Dayrell on the right, straight through Briary, across Wakefield Lawn, through Waterslade, and ran into him going away for Moorend. A capital 55 minutes. Drew Fire Furze, Colonel FitzRoy's new covert, and Grafton Park blank. Found in the Forest; did not get out of the wood again. I rode Oxford and Rifleman.

"Nov. 25th.—Plumpton Wood. Found, and after a ring or two in the wood away leaving Canons Ashby on the right, through the Gorse, away to Little Preston, on to Mantel's Heath, through the Knightley Wood, and on to Maidford Village; short back to Little Preston, back through Canons Ashby Gorse on pointing for Adstone, short to the left, they ran into him as he was crossing a grass meadow near Little Preston. An hour and thirty minutes, as good as a man wishes to see, and over a very stiff country. A fine fox indeed. I rode Cheerful, he carried me brilliantly. We found another fox in Gomerall's Holt; away close at him pointing for Allithorn; was headed back through Plumpton Wood, away through the lower coppice to Adstone, on to Maidford Mill; short to the left to the Canons Ashby Gorse, but did not enter, away to Canons Ashby Village, pointing for the ponds, short back through the Canons Ashby Gorse, and away pointing for Preston Capes to the right, when they ran into him crossing a grass field (going away for Preston Wood) near to Little Preston. I rode Cheerful first, Ensign second, both horses carried me magnificently. Don't think I ever had more jumping in one day. Many horses tired first run.

"Dec. 3rd.—Bradden. Kingthorn blank, found in

Grub's Coppice, after going into the gorse a time or two, away at a rattling pace, leaving Foxley Mill just on the right, Blakesley on the right, up the grass fields pointing for Bradden, through Woodend, straight through Plumpton Wood, pointing for Canons Ashby, leaving Gomerall's Holt on the right, to Weston Village, leaving it on the right, and away pointing for Oakley Bank, turned to the right through Weedon Village, pointing for Allithorn, but turned to the left along the meadows at a killing pace ran into him in Weedon Bushes, about 55 minutes in the open, the fastest I ever rode to in my life; only myself and young Austin Johnson with the hounds. 18 couples. I rode Cheerful; carried me capitally.

"Dec. 14th.—At Tile House. Found a fox, and went away to Dadford. Found another at Stratford Hill; they ran to Chackmore to ground. Found again at Foxcote Wood, ran away to Wicken; lost him. Found again in Wicken Spinneys, they ran hard for 30 minutes and killed him in Leckhampstead Wood. Went away with another, leaving Lillingstone Dayrell on the left, Tilley's on the right, away across Luffield Abbey grounds to Hatch Woods; short back same line, and stopped the hounds at Tilley's House. The fox doubled back into the wood, only just before them; but it was dark, and all the horses tired. I never saw hounds go faster, all the way best pace. 18 couples bitches. Rataplan and Ensign.

1871. Stopped by frost from 19th Dec., 1870, to 16th Jan., 1871.

"Jan. 18th.—Castlethorpe, 12 o'clock. Found in Gayhurst Wood, Linford Wood blank. Away at a capital pace to Salcey Forest, lots of foxes soon on foot, ran from fox to fox, at last ran one to ground under the

Hartwell Road; left him as it came on cold rain and gave it up. I rode Rataplan and Ensign. 20 couples of dogs out. The first time the Duke has been out this season.

"Feb. 4th.—After a frost met at Whistley Wood. Found a good show of foxes, they ran with a capital scent an hour, away to ground near Astwell Mill; bolted him, and the hounds ran into him in two fields. Another fox bolted from same drain, they ran him to Wappenham, over the brook to Helmdon, ran into him. Cheerful and Ensign. 25 couples of dogs.

"Feb. 8th.—Hartwell. Found a fox in Ash Wood, away at a rattling pace, straight through the Forest, Horton Wood on the left, away through the Chase, but headed short back on his foiled ground to Salcey Forest, killed him. Found again at Ash Leys; they ran at a terrific pace across Courteenhall Park, over the cutting at the bridge, along the line, recrossed the railroad, across the Courteenhall Park, into Salcey, out again pointing for Preston Park, and killed in Quinton Field; at least the hounds did not really kill him, for he ran into a barn, some men caught him and put him into a sack, and turned him up before the hounds, but he was quite dead. 22 couples dogs. I rode Rataplan and Oxford.

"Feb. 10th.—At Astwell Mill. Found at Allithorn, away at a rattling pace along the meadows to Astwell Mill, on, leaving Whistley on the right, Syresham on the left, over the Biddlesden brook, when they caught view at him, and raced along through Whistley, and ran into him at Astwell Mill. Hounds running three hours. A capital day, and I never saw people tumble about as they did. I rode Cheerful and Ensign: 18 couples of bitches out.

Feb. 13th.—Met at Adstone. Found in Canon's Ashby

Gorse. Away leaving Adstone village on the right, through Plumpton Wood, Gomerall's Holt, Weston Village and Helmdon on the left, and Halse Coppice on the right, to Radstone; was headed and ran, leaving Whistley Wood on the right, to Falcote, back pointing for Syresham, through Whistley Wood, heading for Astwell Mill, leaving Falcote Village just on the right, and hounds ran into him in a grass field between Whitby and Radstone. Time, 2 hours and 20 minutes. A most capital run, and the falls were innumerable. I had one, the first I have had this season, off Rataplan. We found another fox in Weedon Bushes, hounds ran him to Wappenham, back to the brook, to ground. Gave it up. I rode Rataplan and Brocklesby. 18 couples dog pack: they worked well.

Feb. 15th.—Wakefield Lawn. Got on the line of a fox from Fire Furze, but he had been gone too long; so we went to Colonel FitzRoy's covert at Grafton, away at a killing pace, leaving Bozenham Mill on the left, along the meadows, over the river, straight over the railway, leaving Castlethorpe on the right, bore to the left to Hanslope, through Tattle End, Gayhurst Wood, to Linford Wood, back through Gayhurst Wood, Stoke Park, to Salcey, to ground under the road; killed him. Found another in Ashton Ashbed, ran a sharp ring by Bozenham Mill, Ashton, and lost him near the railroad. Found again in Grafton Park, ran a very fast ring by Alderton Meadows, leaving the village on the left, and lost him at Grafton. I rode Rifleman, jumped the brook under Grafton, which stopped the whole field, and they could not get through the ford; so I had it all to myself, to Hanslope.

"Feb. 17th.—Met at Radstone. Found several foxes in Brackley Gorse, got away at a rattling pace. They

ran to Cold Ready and Farthinghoe, then to Newbottle, back to Brackley Gorse, away, leaving Radstone on the right, through Whistley to Astwell Mill, and ran into him in the open near Helmdon. I rode Cheerful and Ensign. 17 couples dogs.

"Feb. 21st.—Tile House. Found in Stowe Ridings; a fast ring by Tile House Wood, back into Stowe Gardens; stopped the hounds. Found at Stratford Hill, and went away immediately at a fast pace through Shalstone Coppice, leaving Westbury Wild on the left, Westbury Village on the left, and over the railroad. To this point no one was within fields of the hounds but Mr. John Elliott and myself. I never saw hounds run harder in my life. The fox only a field before them; but, most unfortunately, we changed our fox at Westbury, after we crossed the railroad. Hounds ran leaving Mixbury on the right, Finmere on the left to Newton Purcell, leaving Frinckford Hill on the right, close past Stratton Mill away to Poundon, Marsh Gibbon on the right, then to Charndon Wood. Several foxes were on foot, so we stopped the hounds. This was a fine run over such a charming line of country. The hounds went at a terrific pace; they ran away from the biggest part of the field. I rode Rifleman; he carried me well. Oxford second horse. 18 couples of bitches.

"Feb. 24th.—Plumpton Wood. Found at Canons Ashby Ponds. Away pointing for Woodford; was headed to the right, leaving Canons Ashby on the right, and ran nearly to Gomerall's Holt, when he jumped up all amongst the hounds; they raced him back, leaving Ashby Gorse on the right, Preston Capes on the left, Everdon Village on right; over the brook to ground within one field of Dodford Holt. $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles as the crow flies.

"We found another fox in Knightley Wood, and ran to Seawell, leaving Lichborough on the right, and to Grimscote Village, and from Foxley away to Lichborough, pointing for Stowe; stopped the hounds; a very hard day. I rode Cheerful and Ensign. 18 couples of bitches and three couples of dogs.

"March 3rd.—Bradden. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales out. Found a fox in Kingthorn Wood. Hounds ran sharply across Bradden Fields, over the brook to Blakesley, where we lost him. Drew Plumpton, Gomerall's Holt, Allithorn, Weedon Bushes, Bradden Spinneys, blank. Found in Grub's Coppice, ran fast to Cold Higham, Seawell Wood to Blakesley; lost him. One of the hottest days I ever remember for the time of year. I rode Cheerful and Brocklesby. 18 couples bitches.

"March 17th.—Wappenham. Found at Brackley Gorse, ran fast to Cold Ready and back. Foxes were vixens, and would not leave the covert. Found again at Whitfield, away at a rattling pace, leaving Westbury on the left, and on to Newton Purcell, through Tingewick Woods, to Lenborough, nearly to Padbury; then back to the right pointing for Claydon, leaving Hillesden on the left, and we stopped the hounds with great difficulty, running hard towards Gawcott, at 7.30. This was a fine run, and hounds ran remarkably stout. I rode Cheerful and Brocklesby. 16 couples of dogs. Did not get home until 9.30.

"April 5th. Sootfield Green. Found in Leckhampstead Wood. Ran a ring very fast by Wicken, round Foxcote Village and Wood, and killed the fox on Mr. Shadrach Tompkins's farm at Leckhampstead. Found again at Maidsmoreton; ran fast to Wicken, down the meadow, and killed. I rode Brocklesby and the Quinton horse.

"April 14th.—Last day of the season, met at Whittlebury. Found in the Forest and ran to ground in Tilley's Wood. Found again in Leckhampstead Wood; ran to Stowe Park, into the ridings, away for Tilley's Wood, headed short back to the left, through Stowe Ridings to Dadford, through the parks to Thatcham Ponds, and hounds killed him in the hop-yard. I rode Stepaway, Treadwell's horse, four-year-old, and Oxford. 18 couples, mixed. A capital finish to a capital season. Charles (William) Wheatley, first whip, Tom Smith second."

1871-72.

Began cub-hunting Aug. 29. Killed a cub in the forest. 34 couples of bitches out.

Nov. 13th. Began regular hunting at Preston Capes. Met at 12.30 on account of frost. Found in Church Wood; ran all over the Preston country but did not kill.

Nov. 17th.—Astwell Mill. Stopped by frost until the following Thursday afternoon. Had a capital afternoon in the Forest, killed a fox.

Nov. 24th.—Whistley Wood. Found a good fox; he secured too much start, but we hunted up to him at Allithorn, ran him to ground at Sulgrave, and having bolted him, he ran back through Allithorn and went to ground at Greatworth.

"Nov. 27th.—Foster's Booth. The first time the Duke was out. Found at Roper's Gorse, and ran to ground at Gayton. Found in Tiffeld Allotments, but the fox would not leave. Went to Easton, found at Waterhall, went away at a killing pace, through Stoke Park, leaving Alderton on the right, Grafton Park on the right, as hard as they could go. A fresh fox jumped up in view; but I had them stopped, and hit off the line of our hunted fox, up to the forest. It was too dark to

go on. 18½ couples bitches. I rode Stepaway and Brocklesby.

Dec. 1st.—Plumpton. Found, went away to Canons Ashby, turned to Maidford Village, and killed the fox there. I rode Cheerful and Ensign. 18 couples bitches out. Frost until Dec. 14th.

Dec. 14th.—Castle Thorpe. Found at Pike's Gorse, and killed at Haversham. Found again at Gayhurst, and ran over the river to Tyringham; back again to Linford Wood, and gave it up.

"Dec. 15th.—Whitfield. Killed our fox in the covert. Found in Brackley Gorse, went through Steane Park to Cockley, on to Marston, where the fox turned short back, leaving Newbottle on the right, and ran through Cold Ready to Hinton, and ran into him in front of the Brackley Workhouse, after 57 minutes, with hardly a check; lots of croppers. We found a third fox in a little spinney in Helmdon Field; close at him to Falcote, Helmdon, and Allithorn, away pointing for Weston Village, to the right along the brook side, between Weedon Wood and Green's Park, to the left into Plumpton. Four or five foxes on foot, so we went home. 35 minutes. A charming line, almost too stiff. A large field out, but the hounds ran away from them. Only Mr. Lambton and myself, Mr. Gosling, Mr. Hibberd, and my second whip really saw the whole of it. I rode Cheerful and Ensign."

Dec. 16th.—Wakefield. A very useful day in the forest, and killed a fox.

Dec. 19th. — Stowe-Nine-Churches. Found and went away to Weedon Village; a fox was headed and ran to the right of Stowe, down to Lichboro' to ground. Found again at Mantel's Heath. The fox left Badby Wood on the left, past Daventry on the left, to Dodford

Holt, through it to Norton Park, leaving the village on the right. Here hounds caught sight of their fox, and raced him; but he just saved his life by going to ground in the earths at Welton Place. I rode Rub-a-Dub and Brocklesby.

Dec. 20th.—Tile House. Found and ran about Stowe Ridings, Stratford Hill, and had a very wild, bad hunting day.

Dec. 22nd.—Bradden. Found at Kingthorn, and ran fast by Bradden Ponds, Green's Park, leaving Wappenham on the left, and then straight through Whistley, pointing for Radstone, where hounds turned to the left, and raced their fox to death close to Whitfield Church. Time, 1 hour and 37 minutes; a capital run. Found again in a spinney close to Whitfield Coppice, ran to Westbury and back to Whitfield. I rode Cheerful and Ensign. 18 couples of bitches out.

"Dec. 26th, 1871.—Preston Capes. I could not hunt on account of a very severe attack of bronchitis. On Sunday last I thought I should have been suffocated. The Duke, with his usual kindness to me, won't hear of my hunting again this week. I hope that by the blessing of Providence I shall start on Monday next. 'Charles' Wheatley hunted the hounds, he is my first whip. He informs me that hounds found a fox at Hinton Gorse, but only half of them got away, so he lost his fox, and went back to the other hounds; then they ran to Fawsley, through Badby, and lost him. Found again at Charwelton, and ran to ground. Another fox was coming up the field; they killed him directly.

Dec. 29th.—Whistley. Hounds found, and ran to Whitfield, and killed him. Found another fox at Brackley, and ran to Weston and lost him. Charles rode Cheerful and Ensign.

Jan. 1st, 1872.—Farthingstone. They found in Mantel's Heath, ran to Heyford Ironworks, and lost their fox at Astcote.

Jan. 3rd.—Hartwell. Found in the forest, ran to ground at Hardingstone, got him out and killed him. The hounds ran alone, not a soul near them, away from every horse. Found again in Ash Leys; ran the fox into a pond, and killed him at Courteenhall.

Jan. 8th.—Tiffield. "My first day out after my attack." Killed a fox and had a fair day.

"Jan. 12th.—Bradden. Found in a haulm-stack close to Kingthorn Wood, and ran pointing for Fosote, leaving Bradden on the right, Blakesley and Seawell on the left, and Grimscote on the right, down to Rodmere, and then back through Grimscote Heath and Grub's Coppice to Seawell; hounds killed their fox at Lichborough. For the first fifty-five minutes pace was terrific. Hounds had the best of it; the ground was deep and there were many falls. I rode Cheerful and Brocklesby."

Jan. 15th.—Woodford. Found in the Gorse, ran to Warden Hill, and lost him. Found in Plumpton Wood; ran fast by Weston and Moreton Pinkney, leaving Eydon on the right, straight away to Culworth, and killed the fox. A capital run.

"Jan. 19th.—Found in Whistley Wood and went at once by Halse, with Allithorn on the right, through Plumpton and Seawell, and we lost him at Lichborough. Found at Astcote Thorns; ran to Towcester, back to Duncote to ground. I rode Cheerful and Brocklesby.* 17 couples, bitches.

* These were Beers' best horses. 'Cheerful, bred by Lord Cloncurry, by Cheerful Horn, I sold to the Duke. The other came from Lincolnshire.—J. M. K. E.

"Jan. 20th.—Bye day. I had a cold, so was not out. Hounds met at Bucknells, away through Stowe Gardens, and ran into him near Buckingham. Found again at Foxcote, and ran to ground near Maidsmoreton. A capital scenting day.

"Jan. 22nd.—Preston Capes. Found at Charwelton osiers, and ran pointing for Fawsley; turned to the left through Hinton Gorse, with Woodford on the right, up to Charwelton, and then away to Fawsley Hinton, and Byfield; finally ran to ground at Mill Spinney; after running hard for nearly three hours. Changed foxes three or four times; good scent, lots of horses tired. I rode Stepaway and Ensign. Ground very deep, and it was a pouring wet day.

"Jan. 24th.—Met at Tile House. Found a lame fox and killed him in the covert. Found in Three Parks Wood; ran to Stowe Gardens and lost him. Found in Stratford Hill; ran to Shalstone, straight away for Astwell; hounds ran him from scent to view, and killed him at Astwell Park. Found again in Bucknells. Hounds ran there for an hour and a half and killed him. A good day, but ground was awfully deep. 18 couples of dogs. I rode Oxford and Quinton.

"Jan. 26th.—Astwell Mill. Found in Allithorn; away by Sulgrave to Edgcote, on to Chipping-Warden Village, back by Wardington, with Thenford Gorse on the left, to Halse Coppice, Radstone and Whitfield Coppice on the left, across Biddlesden Park, on through Whitfield Wood, and stopped the hounds. We changed foxes several times, but hounds were running the whole time, and I consider this to be the most severe day for horses and hounds I ever saw. I never saw either of my whippers-in for the last two and a half hours, each tiring his second horse. Lord Charles FitzRoy assisted me nearly to the

kennels with the hounds. I rode two of my best horses, and my second horse was so tired that he could scarcely get home. My two whippers-in reached home about two hours after me. 18 couples bitches. I rode Cheerful and Brocklesby.

"Jan. 29th.—Stowe-Nine-Churches. Found and went away directly straight over the hill, leaving Dodford on the left, and ran to ground under the London and North-Western Railroad. Found again in Little Preston Wood, and killed at Mill Spinney, close to Fawsley. I rode Ensign and Rifleman. 19 couples of bitches.

"Jan. 31st.—Hartwell. Found in Ash Leys. Away through Plane Woods to Tiffeld Allotments, turned to the right under Eastcote, and ran the fox to ground in Mr Grove's Earths; bolted and killed him. Another fox bolted out, went away past Drayson's House. Grims-cote Heath, pointing for Astcote Thorns, and ran into a barn at Pattishall and killed him. A most capital day's sport. I rode Oxford and Rifleman. 21 couples, dogs.

"Feb. 9th.—Bradden. Killed a turn down fox at Bradden Ponds. Kingthorn Wood blank. Just as we were putting them into Astcote Thorns a halloo brought us back to Potcote, but no fox! Found in Lichborough Coppice, and ran away past Foxley to Bradden Brook, turned to the right, leaving Blakesley on the left, to Foxley, to ground near Grims-cote Heath, at a killing pace the whole way. Don't remember seeing hounds run faster. Found again in Seawell Wood; ran to Farthingstone Wood, to Mantel's Heath, Hen Wood, back to Farthingstone Village, to Seawell Wood and Lichborough. Hounds raced him in view to a drain, put a Roman candle in the drain, he bolted (no wonder!), and they killed him in two fields. I rode

Cheerful and Brocklesby. 17½ couples of bitches, they did well, ground very deep.

"Feb. 23rd.—Brackley. Found in the Gorse, away to Steane; hounds divided. Both lots ran away for Halse Coppice, on to Helmdon, back towards Greatworth and Brackley Gorse; away again across Steane Park, over the road to Hinton-in-the-Hedges, back to Brackley Station, and Evenley Park. Two or three fresh foxes were on foot; we changed and went away with a fresh one to Whitfield Coppice, through Hatch Woods, Crown Lands, to Bucknells; gave it up. Two or three fresh foxes on foot there. A very hard day indeed for hounds and horses, the ground fearfully heavy. Impossible for horses to go with the hounds. A burning scent in the morning. Had the bitches out again to-day, although they were out on Wednesday; they worked remarkably well. 18 couples. I rode Brocklesby and Ensign.

"March 15th.—Met at Astwell Mill. His Royal Highness Prince Arthur out. He came on a visit to the Duke of Grafton at Wakefield Lodge. Weedon Wood blank. Found in Plumpton Wood, away at a great pace to Maidford, and killed him, at least a sheep-dog undoubtedly did, as his owner popped him into a ditch! The hounds were that jealous they would not eat the fox! Found again in Seawell Wood, ran to Grimscote Heath, round to Lichborough, back to Seawell Wood, round to Cold Higham, and lost him. Kingthorn and Astcote Thorns blank, gave it up. 17 couples bitches. I rode Cheerful and Brocklesby.

"March 16th.—Wakefield Lawn. Found at Fire Furze, away at a rattling pace, along to Bozenham Mill, over the river to Hanslope, and lost him. Found again at Colonel FitzRoy's new covert, ran at a killing pace to

Stoke Park, short back through the Gardens, past the front of the house pointing for the Colonel's covert, turned to the left up to the canal; here the hounds caught view, they never left him, but raced him to death before he could reach the Park Wood.

"His Royal Highness saw the whole, and rode pluckily and well. I had the honour of presenting him with the brush, for which he kindly thanked me. Also he paid me a high compliment in saying 'I had shown the best sport of any pack in England.' He said also:—"You had the best sport in England last year." His Royal Highness was obliged to go by an early train, so left for Wakefield for luncheon. Did no more worth recording. I rode Rub-a-Dub and Quinton. 16 couples dogs.

"March 18th.—Preston Capes. Found near Fawsley, ran to Preston Church Wood on to Canons Ashby. A fearful snowstorm came on, and we lost the fox. Found in Allithorn, ran fast towards Sulgrave, turned short to the right past Colonel Hutchinson's covert on to Plumpton Wood, back to Weston and killed him. An hour and ten minutes, a most capital run. I rode Stepaway, he carried me brilliantly, and Ensign."

April 11th.—Ended the season at Sootfield Green. Charles (William) Wheatley, first whipper-in; Tom Smith, second whip.

1872-73.

"1872, Nov. 18th.—First day of the season. Met at Foster's Booth. Found in Drayson's osier-bed, away over the brook at a good pace, ran to Stowe, leaving the village on the right, pointing for Lichborough, bore away over the hill pointing for the barracks, but the fox was headed; he made his point by leaving Weedon

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on the left, over the road through Floore Village, Brockhall on the left, to Brington, and leaving Buckby Wharf on the left to Crick Station, over the railroad to Welton. Here the scent got dreadful; a cold drizzling rain came on, prevented us killing our fox. This was undoubtedly the same fox all the way, and we were unfortunate in not killing him; it would have been quite a 'red-letter' day. 20 couples of bitches. I rode Stepaway and Brocklesby. There were numerous falls, and several came to grief at Newbottle Brook. A very stiff country indeed.

"Dec. 2nd.—Preston Capes. Found in Hollowell Pool, ran to Charwelton, lost him. Found another in Hinton Gorse, away at a rattling pace to Church Wood, through Ashby Ponds to Moreton Pinkney, to the right up to the Sulgrave Road, back to Eydon, leaving the house and gorse on the left, and away pointing for Red Hill, but bore away to Hinton Gorse, back through Hinton Village to Woodford, and killed him in the churchyard. About an hour and thirty-five minutes. I rode Stepaway and jumped the new railway railings by Moreton Pinkney, and stopped the whole Field, so that I had it to myself for over three miles—quite alone! Rifleman second horse. 18½ couples of bitches."

Dec. 9th.—Adstone. Found a bob-brushed fox at Lichborough Coppice. Ran thirty-five minutes close on his back all the way, and killed at Lichborough. Found another at Grimscothe Heath and lost him at Heyford.

"Dec. 30th.—Preston Capes. Found at Hinton Gorse; away at a tremendous pace to Ganderton's, turned to the left through Church Wood, away through the village, leaving Little Preston just on the right, and then over the road pointing for Canons Ashby to Adstone, turned short over the brook, leaving Maidford

Village on the right, straight away through Stowe Wood without dwelling a moment, over the hill and Everdon brook, and short back to Mantel's Heath to ground. Had we killed him this would have been one of the best runs I ever rode to, the pace being so good throughout. A great many falls; a great many in the brook. I was carried magnificently through this famous run on Step-away; he proved himself a remarkable stayer; no other horse went the distance he did. 18 couples mixed. Brocklesby was my second horse."

"1873. Jan. 1st.—At Castlethorpe. Found at Pike's Gorse and ran away to Castlethorpe, and lost him. Found again in Gayhurst Wood, away through Stoke Park, over the road nearly to Ravenstone Village, through Ravenstone Wood, through Horton to Hackleton, straight away to Salcey, which he did not enter, but ran short back to Horton House, where hounds killed him. A capital run; lots of falls. I got into a pond, and Captain White jumped in after me and knocked me head over heels under water, and I was obliged to swim across; was never so wet in all my life, but I went on and killed my fox afterwards. The pond was at the corner of Ravenstone Wood. 17 couples of dogs. I rode Oxford and Rifleman.

"Jan. 6th.—Found a fox in Stowe Wood after ringing there an hour or more, went away over the hill to Goff's House, away through Everdon Stubbs, Mantel's Heath, Knightley's Wood, Little Preston Wood on the left, away nearly to Preston Capes, through Little Preston, away towards Adstone Gorse, leaving Adstone and Maidford on the right, through Seawell Wood, over the road away over the bottom, pointing for Farthingstone, over the brook, and ran into him in the grass meadows pointing for Stowe. An hour and thirty minutes in the open.

A first-rate run. I was riding Stepaway, he carried me magnificently all the way. We had 18 couples of bitches.

"March 28th.—Brackley Town. Found in Whistley Wood; away at a tremendous pace, pointing for Halse; turned short away under Radstone, and killed going back into Whistley. Found at Whitfield Coppice and ran very fast to Turweston, over the brook into Whistley, round the wood and out again, over the brook to Whitfield, through Biddlesden Gardens to Shalstone, across Boycott Farm to Dadford, on to the left through Whitfield Wood, up to Biddlesden Cross-roads, where I stopped them as our horses were all dead beat. Lord Valentia was out and said it was the best run he had seen this season. I rode Stepaway and Brocklesby. 18 couples mixed."

Finished the season April 28th.—"The past has been the wettest season I ever remember. Impossible for horses to go straight with hounds, the country being so deep. Tom Smith, first whip; Wm. Smith, second whip.

1873-74.

1873. Sept. 5th.—Began cub-hunting. Went out twenty-seven times and killed twenty-two foxes.

Nov. 10th.—Began regular hunting at Foster's Booth. Found in Astcote Thorns and ran him to ground. Found again in Tiffeld Allotments; away to Easton Park, and back to Tiffeld, and on to Nun Wood, where we stopped.

"Nov. 26th.—At Wakefield Lawn. Found in Fire Furze, went away directly as hard as they could go to Ashton, and ran him to ground in Roade field. Drew Ashton Ash-bed blank, and as we were going away our hunted fox came out of the hole; we ran him for three or four fields, and bowled him over near the Ash-bed. Colonel

FitzRoy's new covert blank. Found a good fox in Stoke Park, and ran away at a good pace to Roade Hyde, leaving Plane Woods on the left, to Blisworth, through Tiffield Allotments to Mr. Ridgway's Gardens, across Mr. Elliott's Farm to Greens Norton Allotments, over the road to ground at Duncote. A capital run, and the fox was viewed dead beat before the hounds for three fields. Such a blinding rain storm came on that the hounds were prevented from running into him. I rode Oxford and Newgentstown, the latter carried me capitally. 18½ couples mixed.

"Nov. 28th.—Radstone. The Duke's first appearance in the hunting field since his illness. Everybody pleased to see his Grace out, and nobody more so than I, Frank Beers.

"Found a good show of foxes in Brackley Gorse; went away with one to Gooseholme, was headed back, and hounds killed him in Gooseholme. Found another in the gorse, ran away very fast along the railway nearly to Greatworth, by Halse Village, leaving Radstone on the left, straight to Biddlesden Gardens, where he crept in dead beat; we could never touch him again. This was a good run, and hounds had a bit the best of the horses all the fore part of it. Found again in Whitfield Coppice, but lost him. 17½ couples mixed.

"Dec. 5th.—Foxley. Found in Grub's Coppice, ran to Astcote Village, Caldecote, over the road to Duncote, where they ran into him. Found in Astcote Thorns, and went away at a capital pace to Tiffield, back to ground, close at him at Caldecote. Found again in Grimscote Heath, ran into a drain near Mr. Ayers's house at Potcote, bolted him; he ran about six minutes, hounds racing him all the way and ran into him. 17 couples mixed.

"Dec. 6th.—A bye-day at Whittlebury. Found in Seven Coppices, raced as though they saw him away to a drain at Silverstone, bolted him; he ran for about five or six fields, and hounds killed him. Found again in Lyncher, away at once through Mr. Robart's coverts, Tile House Wood just on the left, through the corner of Stowe Ridings, across Park Fields Farm, past Thatcham Ponds, straight through Hatch Woods without dwelling, along the brook side to Syresham, bore away down to Mr. Morgan's at Biddlesden, where they ran from scent to view and knocked him over just as he entered the gardens. Time fifty minutes, as good as I ever saw, without a check; the best run we have had this season. Found again in Bucknells, went over the open for Astwell Mill, but as we did not want to disturb that country, stopped the hounds. Went back to Bucknells, found, and ran to Silverstone and Whittlebury, and stopped the hounds in the park. 25 couples mixed pack.

"Dec. 22nd.—Little Preston. Found in Church Wood. Away close to his brush through Little Preston Wood, away just through the bottom corner of Mantel's Heath, straight away to Farthingstone, nearly to Stowe Wood, but was headed over the bottom, and they ran into him before he could reach Lichborough. Time, thirty minutes as fast as possible. Found again in Knightley Wood, ran through Seawell Wood past Cold Higham to Foster's Booth, on to Astcote Thorns; lost him. About fifty minutes, very good indeed. A couple of foxhound puppies ran the fox, which spoiled the finish, or I think we should have killed him. Found again in Grimscote Heath; away straight to Tiffeld Village to a drain which happened to be stopped, then ran at best pace back to Farthingstone, to

Knightley's Wood, to the top corner of Mantel's Heath, and back through Seawell Wood. I stopped hounds when going for Foxley; it was quite dark. A tremendous day for hounds. I never saw hounds run stouter than they did to-day. I rode Stepaway and Newgentstown. 17 couples bitches.

"Dec. 26th.—Whistley Wood. Ran a fox for forty minutes, he would not leave the covert; hounds killed him. Found again in Halse Coppice; away at a fast pace to the parish of Thorpe Mandeville, to Sulgrave, back through Allithorn to Astwell Mill, over the brook to Wappenham on the right, over the railroad and brook, over the hill, and hounds killed him before he could reach Greens Park. An hour, the best thing of the season. Hounds ran at a great pace all the time; a large field of the Bicester men out, who all said it was the best run they had seen this season. Colonel Hutchinson's Covert we then drew blank; found in Allithorn, but the scent had changed. We went nearly to Plumpton Wood, on to Canons Ashby, and lost him. I rode Brocklesby and Lansley's horse. 17½ couples bitches.

"1874. Jan. 9th.—Radstone. Found in Brackley Gorse. Went to ground. Found in the Ash-bed and ran fast, leaving Radstone on the left, over the Turweston brook (where several came to grief) to Whitfield Coppice, where I think we changed foxes; through Westbury Wild, across Biddlesden Park, Syresham Village just on the right, and Crown Lands, on to Handley without checking; hounds were on the go all the time until 4.30; a very hard day indeed.

"Jan. 12th.—Met at Farthingstone. Found in Stowe-Nine-Church Wood and ran to ground under Mr. Johnstone's house. Found again in Mantel's Heath,

and away directly through Knightley Wood and Burnfold, leaving Māidford Village on the left, Blakesley on the right, to Foxley, Grub's Coppice on the left, Duncote on the right, Towcester Union on the left, all the back of Towcester, across Easton Neston Park, to Montgomery's house, and killed the fox in Heathencote Plantation. An hour and thirty minutes. 18½ couples of bitches. I rode Stepaway.*

"Jan. 14th—Hartwell. Found in the forest. Hounds ran a fox as though they were tied to him for forty minutes, and killed him. Found again in Brayfield Furze, a lame fox; they soon killed him. Found foxes in the Chase, ran there an hour and thirty minutes and killed one in Weston Wood.

"Jan. 19th.—Shoseley. Found in Plane Woods, went with a rattle through Stoke Park to the forest, and killed a fox in Wakefield kitchen garden. A capital run. Found again at Easton Neston Gardens, ran to Roade Cutting and lost him. More than half the hounds went down the cutting and not one hurt. A train luckily pulled up in the cutting to allow the hounds to escape; a mercy they did escape.

"Jan. 28th.—Tile House. Found in Mrs. Pilgrim's gardens, away to Tile House, across Stowe Park to Stowe Ridings, through Foxcote Wood, Wicken Spinneys, by Beachampton Ford to Furzen Field, pointing to Bourton Brake, and, running from scent to view, they pulled him down in a grass field before he could reach the Brake. A most capital run.

"Jan. 30th.—At Astwell Mill. Found in Allithorn,

*Stepaway was bred by Mr. R. Treadwell of Shalstone, a good farmer and fox preserver. He was known to the people in general as "Rat-tail." As he was such a valuable horse, I name this for the credit of the Hunt, where he was bred and spent his life.—J. M. K. E.

the fox running away to Helmdon, over the road, across Stuchbury grass fields, leaving Sulgrave on the left, and away at the back of Weedon, across the grass to Oakley Bank to ground; the fox just saved his brush. Found again at Plumpton, and ran to ground at Adstone.

"Feb. 2nd.—Adstone. Found a brace of foxes lying in a field between Adstone and Canons Ashby; went away with a capital start to Preston, round by Ganderton Spinney, back to Mantel's Heath, leaving Everdon on the right, short back to Little Preston Wood to Mantel's Heath, where we killed him. Found again in Charwelton osier-bed, away to within one field of Griffin's Gorse, to the right pointing for Staverton, over the grass field, back to Fawsley, and we stopped the hounds going into Badby Wood. A very hard day. 18 couples bitches.

"1874. Feb. 28th.—A bye-day at Sootfield Green. Found in Leckhampstead Wood; with a good scent hounds ran for an hour in covert and went away pointing for Foxcote, turned to Wicken Spinneys, then towards Leckhampstead, where they caught him. An hour and thirty minutes. Found again in Wicken Spinneys, ran fast through Leckhampstead Wood, over the open, past Puxley into the forest; across the Lawn, back past the Pond-head, into Dairy quarter. They killed him after fifty-eight minutes. Found again in Redmere. With a capital scent hounds raced across the Pheasantry into Lady Coppice, where they ran hard for an hour and ten minutes and killed him. A capital day; hounds proved themselves almost untirable. Every hound went home and fed well, which I consider speaks volumes for health and condition.

"March 2nd. — Stowe-Nine-Churches. Found, and after a ring or two in covert went away towards Daventry; lost the fox at Dodford.

"Found in Mantel's Heath; away fast past Preston, Ashby Gorse, to Adstone: over the Maidford Brook, and back into Mantel's Heath, where they killed the fox. Time, fifty-five minutes, as good a run as one wishes to see.

"March 13th.—Foxley. Found at Seawell; ran to Maidford, over the Preston Road to Farthingstone, and back to Seawell, and lost him. Found in Grub's Coppice, away at best pace to Caldecote, on past Shutlanger, Stoke Bruerne, and Alderton, and killed him at Mr. Roper's at Grafton."

CHAPTER XI.

FRANK BEERS' DIARIES (*Continued*).

1874-75.

1874. Aug. 24th.—Began cubhunting. Out thirty-eight days, killed fifty foxes.

Nov. 9th.—We began regular hunting at Stowe-Nine-Churches. A Stowe cubhunting day, killed a fox and ran one to ground.

“Dec. 11th.—Astwell Mill. Found in Allithorn, away to ground at Stuchbury. Found in Whistley Wood, away towards Radstone, very straight to Halse Coppice, through the right-hand covert; they raced from scent to view, and knocked him over, going to Stuchbury. A capital thirty-five minutes.” Went to Bucknells, and ran nearly to Towcester, and stopped them.

“1875. Jan. 6th.—Castlethorpe. Found in Linford Wood; away to Stoke (Goldington) Park, pointing for Hanslope, where they raced into him in the open. Found in Gayhurst Wood, ran very fast through Linford Wood, across Gayhurst Park, over the open by Tattle End, back to Gayhurst Wood, out at the bottom corner, where they ran into him. Found again in the Round Wood, a fox quite tired; they ran him round the covert once and

killed him ; gave it up. A good scenting day. I rode Dandy and Grey Mare. 20 couples of dogs.

" Jan. 8th.—Blakesley Village. Found in Plumpton Wood. Went once or twice round the wood, at last away pointing for Canons Ashby, to the right across Adstone Fields, straight through Ashby Gorse ; up the hill road he was headed, and sank the valley to the osier-bed near Charwelton ; was headed by a shepherd, ran along the brookside, nearly to Hinton Gorse, turned over the fields as though he meant Eydon, short back, leaving Canons Ashby Ponds on the right, past Mr. Flowers's house to Lichborough, down the bottom, where we viewed him, raced in view to Farthingstone. He evaded the hounds by the people hallooing so much ; got back to Lichborough, on through Knightley's Wood and Little Preston Wood, out at the bottom corner pointing for Preston Church Wood, where they killed him going with his head set for Hogstaff. Ran into him in the open, after one of the best runs the Duke of Grafton's Hounds have ever had. Time, two hours and ten minutes. I rode Stepaway nearly all the run ; he carried me brilliantly, but he never had such a severe day in his life before. We had a tremendous Field out, and many came to grief, and a great many tired horses., Mr. Rice, jun., of Northampton, broke his horse's leg. We then went to Seawell, found a great many foxes ; the hounds divided ; we ran past Lichborough to Stowe Wood. Stopped the hounds, a very hard day for them, they ran remarkably stout just after the frost. 19 couples of bitches.

" Jan. 18.—Foster's Booth. Found several foxes in Stowe Wood ; after ringing round the covert for nearly half an hour, killed him. Went away with another, pointing for Weedon, hurried to the right, away leaving Heyford Ironworks on the left, Bugbrook on

the left, along the brookside, past Drayson's osier-bed and house, to Banbury Lane, hunted him back to Eastcote, to ground; put in a terrier, bolted him, went away at a rattling pace to Bugbrook Downs, over the brook towards Stowe, over the Lichborough bottom, as hard as hounds could race, to Grimscote Village, leaving it just to the right, on to Potcote, ran away from nearly all the Field; in fact, up to here the pace was very fast; only Mr Barry, of Blisworth, and myself with them to Grimscote Village. At Potcote we came to a check, hit him off again at Astcote Thorns, straight through the covert, they ran the fastest I ever saw hounds run, to Tiffield, to ground in a drain. We stopped up the water at the top for a few minutes, and washed him out and killed him. This has been a real good day's sport, and a hard day for hounds, they have been running all day. A great many people out; several from the Pytchley country, who said it was the best day they had seen this season. I rode Brocklesby first horse, who carried me wonderfully well, and Newgentstown second horse. We had 20 couples of bitches out.

1875.

"Jan. 25th.—Preston Capes. Found in Hogstaff, went away through Badby Wood, pointing for Charwelton, turned back to the left to Mill Spinney, over the Brook to Mantel's Heath, where they ran twenty minutes, through Farthingstone Wood, Lichborough on the left, Grimscote Heath to the right; ran into him near Weedon a capital run, 2 hours and 30 minutes. Found again in Stowe Wood, ran to Heyford, and lost him. I rode Newgentstown and Oxford. 17 couple of dogs.

"Jan. 27th.—Met at Wicken Village, Wicken Spinneys and the Thornton Spinneys, Foxcote Wood, and Mr. Robart's little covert blank. Found in Mrs. Pilgrim's Wood; off at a great pace through Stowe Park, and the gardens, to Guernsey Hill, Chackmore, back to Mrs. Pilgrim's and Stowe Park, to ground. Found again in Tile House Wood, away through Mrs. Pilgrim's down to Lillingstone, short back through Tile House Wood, Stowe Ridings, over the grass, nearly to Three Parks Wood; through the top corner of Whitfield Wood, away to the Biddlesden cross-roads, pointing for Westbury Wild, ran between the Whitfield Coppices, through Whitfield, through the Clergyman's Garden, up to the Brackley Road, at last ran within a field of Whistley Wood, along the flat; they raced along and ran from scent to view, and bowled him over at Astwell Park Farm. This has been a most capital run, and very satisfactory time, an hour and thirty minutes. I rode the Grey Mare the whole time, could not get my second horse; she carried me capitally, but very beat to finish.

"Feb. 15th.—At Preston Capes. Found in Hinton Gorse; went down by Woodford, through Ganderton Spinney, up to Church Wood, killed him; fifty minutes best pace. Found at Canons Ashby, ran through Plumpton Wood past Blakesley Hall to Seawell Wood on to Foxley, past Caswell to Bradden Ponds, through the spinneys, on for Greens Park, nearly to the lower coppice of Plumpton Wood, back through Blakesley Village, away to Bradden Fields, over the brook, up the meadows, and ran into him near Blakesley Church. 2 hours and 35 minutes, as good a hunting run as one could see.

1875-76.

Aug. 30th, 1875.—Began cub-hunting. Went out

thirty-three times, killed forty-one foxes. "The best cub-hunting I ever remember, and the wettest, great floods several times during the cubhunting; hundreds of sheep drowned, between 100 and 150 drowned at Shutlanger and Stoke Meadows.

Nov. 8th.—Hounds began regular hunting at Foster's Booth. Found in Everdon Stubbs; a lot of ringing about, not much sport.

"Nov. 19th.—Radstone. Found in Brackley Gorse, went away at a tremendous pace, pointing for Halse Coppice, Radstone to the left, over the brook by Turweston; only three rode at it, myself, Tom Smith my first whip, and a young gentleman Mr. Hannay by name, he got a regular cropper; Tom Smith broke his horse's back. I got well over, but my horse, Newgentstown, came on to his nose and knees! I rolled off, but up and on instantly, and after the hounds; ran to Biddlesden Park. We did not persevere further that way owing to Mr. Morgan's shooting. Found at Halse Coppice a brace of foxes, but they went to ground. Found again in Whistley Wood, ran well there for forty minutes; at last, like pigeons, up wind to Radstone, to ground under the road, poked him out with a pole, and killed him.

"Dec. 13th.—Preston Capes. Found in Hinton Gorse; ran past Charwelton osier-bed, over pointing for Fawsley, to ground near Griffin's Gorse. Found again in a hedgerow near Charwelton, ran him to ground. Found again in the osier-bed near the old Mill, over the brook nearly to Hinton, back to Charwelton, and killed him there. Found again at Hogstaff, ran to Badby Wood, back through Preston Church Wood, through Badby Wood, and stopped the hounds at Sudborough; a tremendous hard day. I rode Egmont and Clansman.

22½ couple bitches, all there at the finish, and ran remarkably stout.

"Dec. 15th.—The Ex-Queen of Naples out. Found in Pike's Gorse, ran to ground in Hanslope field. Found again in Linford Wood, ran at a good pace round by Haversham Village, back through Linford Wood to Gayhurst House, to ground in a drain leading under the house. Found again in a spinney near Gayhurst, ran about a mile; they killed him. The Queen had the brush."

Jan., 1876.—Unsettled weather, with frost, not much sport.

"Feb. 18th.—Foxley. Found in Seawell Wood, ran away through Maidford, Burnfold to the left, Lichborough on the right, to Stowe; it came on to rain fearfully; lost him. Found again in Grimscote Heath. Hounds raced away past Bushey End up to Caldecote, and ran into him at Mr. Ridgway's, as hard as they could race all the way. Found again in Bushey End; they raced at an extraordinary pace past Grimscote Heath, just to the left to Foster's Booth, as hard as they could go to Astcote Thorns, ran into him. The best scenting day I have seen for a long time. I rode a new horse from Lincolnshire first, Newgentstown second, and Gordon's horse third. Seventeen and a half couples of bitches. A large field of people out.

"Feb. 28th.—Adstone. Found in Hinton Gorse, ran fast to Warden Hill to ground. Found again at Ganderton's; away pointing for Snorscombe, turned to the right just under little Preston Wood to Canons Ashby, back by Ganderton, and ran into him in the long hedgerow. Forty-five minutes best pace.

The first time the ex-King of Naples was out hunting. I presented His Majesty with the brush.

Found another in Canons Ashby Ponds, ran (a ring) to ground at Eydon. I rode Egmont and Clansman. 17½ couples bitches.

"March 3rd.—Found in Whitfield Coppice, killed one in covert. Away with another to Westbury to ground. Found again in Brackley Gorse, away some distance parallel with the railroad, turned to the right pointing for Halse, leaving Radstone fir plantation to the left, Whistley Wood to the right, away to Syresham, straight through Crown Lands, the back of Silverstone Village, Charlock and Hanley, to the left, over the Towcester road at Swinney-ford, along the brook side to within a field of Towcester Union. This gallant fox here was run from scent to view, and run into. As fine a run as I ever saw! an hour and thirty minutes, twelve miles from point to point. A large Field out, but very few in at the death. We then found an outlying fox on Montgomery's farm at Heathencote, and had about seven minutes in view all the way, and ran him to ground; another fifty yards would have been the death of him. I rode Grey Mare and Newgentstown. 17½ couple bitches, including a few small dog hounds."

[*Note.*—I always thought this the best run I ever saw from Brackley Gorse. I never saw Frank Beers to greater advantage in getting through the woods (Crown Lands), I watched him narrowly. We caught sight of the fox a mile before we caught him. At this point I thought Frank perfect, he never lost his head, and enforced silence at the end of a run when he could.—J. M. K. E.]

" March 7th, 1876.—A private day. Met on Wakefield Lawn for:—

THE EMPRESS OF AUSTRIA, who arrived in England on Sunday evening, lunched with Her Majesty the Queen of England on Monday; came to Easton Neston on Monday evening, and hunted with the Duke of Grafton's hounds this day. HER MAJESTY THE EMPRESS OF AUSTRIA, THE EX-KING AND QUEEN OF NAPLES, and large suite, met on the lawn at 2 o'clock. Lord Charles FitzRoy was in waiting at Buckingham Palace; so Colonel FitzRoy, of Grafton Regis, brought the Empress and introduced me to Her Majesty. After a long talk with Her Majesty about the hounds and country, &c., we moved off to Fire Furze to draw.

" The Empress here came and asked me to pilot her over the country.

" Fire Furze blank. Found in Colonel FitzRoy's new covert; away at a rattling pace, pointing for Stoke, but the fox was headed back to Grafton Village; lost him. Found again in Stoke Park. Went away past Stoke Plain, Plane Woods to the left to Roade Station, did not go over the line, ran by the side of it to Ashton Village, and killed him at the Ash-Bed. A very pretty run.

" The Empress rode beautifully, and expressed her great delight to me, and thanked me very much indeed for the good sport. I had the honour of presenting Her Majesty with the brush. The Queen of Naples went well also. The Austrian Counts and Princes also rode capitally; one got a good cropper!

" March 10th.—At Bradden. A very large Field out, including the Empress of Austria and Queen of Naples, several foreigners, and many ladies, both on horseback

and in carriages. Kingthorn Wood blank, also Bradden Spinneys. Found in Plumpton Wood, away at once, Oakley Bank just to the left, as hard as hounds could travel to Weedon Bushes ; turned short through Weston Village to Plumpton Village, leaving it on the left, to the Wood, into Lower Coppice ; back across Adstone Field, and away to within a field of Plumpton Church. He got into a big hole, but two of the hounds went in and pulled him out. A capital run, and never did I see hounds go faster than in the ring back to Plumpton.

"The Empress, Colonel Pennant (her Majesty's pilot), and myself were the only three with them up to Weston, when Her Majesty's horse stood still in the middle of a grass field, completely pumped out ! I got a fall out of it, and was hung up in my stirrup. Luckily my horse was pumped a bit, so only walked away with me and behaved capitally—did not kick me or kick at me. I had not been dragged far before the leather came out of the bar and set me at liberty. Found again in Seawell Wood, away through Lichborough Coppice to Grimscote Village, on to Church Stowe, lost him. I rode Newgentstown and Clansman. 17½ couple mixed.

"March 31st.—Radstone. Her Imperial Majesty the Empress of Austria, Prince Teck, and a great many other Princes, Counts, and noblemen were out. A very swell field and a large one. The Empress and the nobility drove to Brackley and had breakfast with Captain the Hon. Grosvenor. We trotted on to Brackley, and waited with the hounds in front of Captain Grosvenor's house. It was a lovely morning—like summer.

"Put the hounds into Brackley Gorse ; a fox was soon on foot, but not above one hound could speak to it. At last he went away, past Steane Park at a rattling pace, within a field of Cockley Brake, over the railroad

pointing for Greatworth; up to this point a great many had come to grief, I (Frank Beers) for one. My horse tumbled over a gate before we reached Cockley Brake, he never rose at it a bit (a new Lincolnshire horse), but I escaped with nothing more than a dirty coat. From Greatworth they raced along between the two Halse coppices, straight over the bottom up to Whistley Wood, down to the bottom corner, back again to the Falcote corner of Whistley Wood, and killed him. About fifty-five minutes—fifty minutes in the open, and a little over five more minutes in Whistley. This has been a capital run, and I never saw so many dirty coats in one day. My horse was quite done at Halse Coppice, but I fortunately got on Tom Smith's, first whip's; he carried me capitally up to the finish. (Egmont the restive horse.) The Empress rode most capitally, and Mrs. Grosvenor rode remarkably well. I presented the brush to the Empress and the head to Mrs. Grosvenor.

“We then drew Allithorn and found, but as I rode into the covert an old bitch, Sprightly, was standing pointing at something in the dried grass. I rode to her, and saw she had before her nose five beautiful cubs, so I got the hounds off the line of the mother, and left the covert as soon as possible. Found in Colonel Hutchinson's covert, ran to Allithorn, so stopped the hounds.

“The last day the Empress hunted this season. Her Majesty made me a present of a very brilliant and handsome pin with twenty-five diamonds surrounding a beautiful sapphire. She also gave to each of my children a lot of beautiful toys, and came to tea with my wife, presented each child the toys herself, and shook hands with each. The Ex-Queen and King of Naples came with Her Majesty, and had some tea also.

"This has been the wettest season I ever remember, and had more snow than usual. The country extremely deep all the season, and quite as deep, if not deeper, at the end as at any part of the season."

April 20th, 1876.—Finished. Tom Smith, first whip; Ed. Cole, second whip.

1876-77.

1876. Aug. 28th.—Began cubhunting; out thirty-nine days, killed fifty-two foxes.

Nov. 13th.—Stowe-Nine-Churches, first day of regular hunting. A long ringing cubhunting day.

1877. Jan. 17th.—Gayton. Found at Ashby's, ran to Blisworth Station, past Milton Ham, and Ladybridge, up to Wootton House, across Delapré Park, and killed him in the covert on the top-side of the Park.

"Feb. 2nd.—Whistley Wood. Found, and with a bad scent in covert, we were ringing there for half an hour, at last went out of covert, a capital scent, they raced along as straight as they could go, over the stiffest line, leaving Halse Coppice to the left, to Greatworth, back down wind leaving Radstone to the left, over the Whitfield Brook, which I got into, and a lady nearly on the top of me; only one other rode at it, Mr. Campbell, he got over. We had our hunted fox beat before us, just before we reached the Brackley road, where three foxes jumped up in view of the whole pack, and away they ran, best pace, over the Whitfield Brook, through Whitfield Coppice to Biddlesden, back to Shalstone, Westbury, back to the Wild, and lost him.

"Drew Whitfield again blank. Had we killed our fox this would have been a clinker and no mistake. I never saw hounds run harder, or horses made such an example of. Mr. Campbell went best, jumping some tremendously

high timber, which stopped many. I rode Brocklesby and Newgentstown. 20½ couple bitches.

"Feb. 23rd.—Wappenham. Trotted off to Whistley Wood to draw first. Found, after going round the wood about twice; went away along the brookside, to Mr. Smith's house at Radstone, turned across the big grass fields, towards Halse Coppice, across Stuchbury grass fields, over the bottom, straight through Allithorn without dwelling a moment, over the brook at the bottom, along the valley to Astwell Mill, over the railroad, straight to Crowfield; got headed, so ran one field parallel with the road, nearly to the top of Whistley Wood, straight through Whistley, over the brook, as if Biddlesden Park were his point, but got headed by a plough-team; he ran to Whitfield Village, and then along the brookside, where they gradually crept up to him and bowled him over, close to Whitfield Mill. Time, just about an hour, and distance done, thirteen miles in the open; about the fastest and best thing I have ever seen; and one of the gamest and stoutest foxes that ever stood before hounds, as the pace was terrific. I was riding Brocklesby; he carried me wonderfully well, but I rode him almost to a standstill; when over Allithorn Brook, which he jumped capitally, I eased him down the road to Astwell Mill, when he got his wind he came again, and carried me through this severe run, and was first horse nearest to the fox, when he was pulled down, out of a large Field. Very few could stay the pace, but a few of the right sort did their best. We then found another fox in Bartlett's Covert (Whitfield Coppice) after dodging about there a bit, he went away to Evenly Park, through the village to Tusmore, and on to Stoke Bushes, round over Cottesford Heath, back to Tusmore, and we stopped hounds going back to Stoke Bushes after a fresh

fox. A most severe day for hounds and horses. 18 couples of bitches, two couples of dogs included. This has been a very open season (it ended April 5th) only been stopped twice by frost, a capital season's sport, but frightfully wet, and deep the whole season. More foxes than have ever been known to have been killed in one season in this country, 51½ brace."

1877-78.

1877. Sept. 7th. — Began cub-hunting at Briary. Hunted thirty mornings, killed thirty-three foxes.

Nov. 12th.—Commenced regular hunting at Stowe-Nine-Churches.

"Dec. 3rd.—Foster's Booth. Found in Grimscore Heath, away through Foxley to Grub's Coppice, past Bushey End, past Caswell, to Blakesley; short back, and ran into him at Foxley bottom. Found again in Astcote Thorns, ran to the road and back, and killed him before he reached the covert. Found another in the Thorns, away past Caswell, and killed him at Tite's Coppice. Went away with another as hard as they could travel, to Woodend, and stopped the hounds going into Plumpton.

"Dec. 14th.—Astwell Mill. Found foxes in Allithorn, away on capital terms with one to Sulgrave, where a fox jumped up out of a hedge, part of the hounds caught view at him, and raced him into the village, and killed him. The other hounds went on nearly to Moreton Pinkney, back to Sulgrave, and finally ran into him in the open at Weston by Weedon; a capital gallop. Found again in Tite's Coppice, away at best pace to Foscote, to ground in a drain. I rode Brocklesby and Limerick, both horses carried me brilliantly. 18 couple bitches."

1878. Jan. 6th.—Took the hounds in the Forest, had a capital day for them privately, killed a brace of foxes.

“Jan. 11th.—Bradden. Found in Kingthorn Wood, away along the brook pointing for Green’s Norton Mill, short to the right over the brook to Foscote; gave him up to go and find another in Tite’s Coppice, ran through Kingthorn, out at the bottom corner, along the railway to Abthorpe, over the brook along the bottom, Oakley Bank to the right, to Plumpton Village, through Plumpton Wood, and Woodend, nearly to Slapton, on leaving Weedon Bushes to the left, through Weedon to Weston, through Gomerall’s Holt where we viewed the fox in the same field with the hounds. They were running for him; but he beat them by getting to ground in the earths at Mr. Edmund’s of Plumpton. A most capital sporting run. Lots of falls; would have been perfection had we killed him. Found again in Weedon Bushes; ran nearly to Wappenham Station, over the brook to Green’s Park, and to ground at Plumpton. I rode Pioneer and Brocklesby. 22½ couple bitches.

“Feb. 20th.—Wakefield Lawn.

The Prince Imperial of France staying at Wakefield with the Duke of Grafton for hunting. Found in Fire Furze, away at once over the river past Stoke Gap, over the railroad to Roade, and lost him at Quinton. Found again in Ash Leys, ran to Courteenhall, back to Ashwood, stopped the hounds going to the forest. Found again in Stoke Park, went to Ashton, back to Shutlanger through Stoke Park, over the river away to Alderton and Grafton, as hard as they could run across the meadows, and ran into him at the Canal Bridge at Stoke Bruerne. A very good hunt. I rode Pioneer and Percival. 17½ couple dogs.

"Feb. 22nd.—Bradden. Found in Plumpton Wood after a ring or two round the covert, away they went along the bottom, on to the railway as far as bridle-gate, round Bradden Village, leaving it on the right, past the ponds on the right, Blakesley on the left, through Astcote Thorns, over the Weedon and Towcester road pointing for Astcote; bore away to Caldecote, as if for Easton Neston, to the left as hard as hounds could race all the way, and ran into him at Tiffield. Fifty-five minutes; the best thing of the season. As we were on the road to draw Bradden again, a fox jumped up out of the fields near Mr. Ridgway's, away down to Towcester Station, along the meadows nearly to Kingthorn, over the brook, past Greens Norton to Astcote Thorns, but did not enter, away to Potcote, Cold Higham, and ran into him at Foster's Booth. Found again at Bushey End, ran him to Astcote Thorns, lost him. I rode Brocklesby and Limerick. 18½ couple dogs.

"The Prince Imperial was out and went very well. The pace was tremendous with first fox."

April 8th.—Deer Park, Yardley Chase, to finish the season. Ground very hard. Found in Denton side, ran to Salcey, got hold of a fox.

1878-79.

1878. Sept. 3rd.—Began cub-hunting, hunted thirty-eight days, killed thirty-three foxes.

Nov. 11th.—Commenced regular hunting at Stowe-Nine-Churches, found a good show of foxes; no very wonderful sport, until——"1879. March 8th—Burcote Wood. Found in Heathencote Plantation, ran very fast on to Mr. Montgomery's farm, away to Plum Park, over Blunt's farm, Grimsdick's farm, to Cattle Hill, to ground in Whittlebury Park. Found

in Stoke Park; away past Shutlanger, to Plane Woods, towards Nun Wood; ran the lane down to Blisworth Canal, alongside, over the Towcester road, Roper's Gorse to the left, Blisworth Gardens on the right, past Gayton, Dalscote, and Eastcote; past Drayson's House, towards Lichborough, over the hill to Church Stowe, through Stowe Wood, and lost him. A very good run; I rode Brocklesby and Brown Stout. Dogs out, 20 couple."

April 19th.—Wakefield Lawn, to finish the season. Found in the Forest, ran to ground at Moorend. Found in Stoke Park, killed in Stoke schoolroom. George Carter, the Bicester huntsman, and Mr. Lowndes' huntsman out.

1879-1880.

1879. Sept. 5.—Began cub-hunting; scarcely a bit of corn cut in this neighbourhood. Hunted thirty-nine days, killed thirty-four foxes.

Nov. 17th.—Began regular hunting at Stowe-Nine-Churches; killed a fox in Stowe Wood. Found again in Everdon Stubbs, lost him; found again in Mantel's Heath; had a good thirty minutes and killed near Adstone.

"1880. Jan. 5th.—Preston Capes. Found a fox in Hinton Gorse, away at once past Mr. Hitchcock's house, as hard as they could go nearly to Red Hill, back to Hinton Gorse to ground in a field near Woodford. Found in the osier-bed. They ran fast to Ganderton; lost him. Canons Ashby Ponds blank. Found in Ashby Gorse; they went away close at him best pace past Lowland, Preston Church Wood on the right, to the left to Charwelton, and, leaving Catesby and Staver-ton to the right, up to Shuckboro' House, where a brace

of foxes were on foot. So we stopped them with difficulty, owing to our horses being dead beat. The time was just an hour, and a more beautiful line it would be impossible to find. Had we killed him it would have been the most perfect run I ever rode. Out of a lot of good men only five of us were there at the finish; the Duke, Mr. Alfred FitzRoy, Mr. Muntz, a farmer and myself. Mr. Muntz went wonderfully well, and said it was the finest run he ever rode, and the stiffest country in England to finish.

"The dog-pack did remarkably well, hunted beautifully, and raced along to the finish. We had about twenty-four miles home on tired horses. I never knew a fox take a finer line of country. It was thought by the Duke that we changed our fox at Catesby, which probably was the case, as I don't think any one fox could have stood the dusting; they ran him so hard to start with. His Grace went well in the last run.

"Jan. 9th.—Whistley Wood. Found directly, after running once round the Wood they went away, Halse Coppice to right; bore to the left through Bartlett's New Covert, over the road, leaving Whitfield Village to the right, along by the brook-side nearly to Biddlesden, over the brook, through top corner of Crown Lands, towards Astwell Park down the grass fields, past Abthorpe, to the right along the railway to Wappenham, through Weedon Coppice, ran from scent to view, and bowled him over along the meadows pointing for Allithorn. One of the best runs I have seen, and never did I see the dog pack do better. Out of a large Field only a very few were up at the death; a great many were lost, and many thought they were sure to go into Bucknells, and never saw them again. Found again in Kingthorn Wood, they ran to Bradden and lost him. As we were

going home, they struck a scent in Handley fields, the Duke ordered us to let them go; at racing pace they ran past Silverstone fields, through Burcote Wood, past Sholebrook, through Whittlebury Park, Tile House to the left, and stopped them going into Stowe Gardens. A very hard day indeed for hounds; they ran very stout. My second horse was dead beat, and both whipper-ins' horses so done that I did not see either of them for the last half-hour. Only Colonel Pennant, Mr. FitzRoy, and Mr. Robarts were left when we stopped them. 19 couple dogs. Brocklesby and Grey Friar."

Stopped by frost from Jan. 19th until Feb. 2nd.

1880. Feb. 10th.—Hartwell. Found in the Clears; they ran thirty-five minutes, as though they were tied to him, and killed him. Found again and had an hour in Salcey and killed him. Found again and ran to ground, horses all beat.

March 13th.—Stowe Ridings. A capital day, killed a brace of foxes. "No better scent this season, I rode poor old Brocklesby, he makes a great noise.

"March 22nd.—At Little Preston. Found in Mantel's Heath, away through Mill Spinney, by Snorscombe, over the Everdon Brook, leaving Badby to the left, Everdon to the right, Newnham to the left, to ground in Pytchley country, not far from the Daventry road, in an earth, dead beat. Found in Preston Church Wood, away leaving Hogstaff to the left, to the top corner of Fawsley Park, ran alongside Badby Wood, leaving it on the right, over the Daventry and Banbury road, over Sharman's Hill, as hard as hounds could race, to Hellidon. Here he was headed by people working in the allotments; so he left the village to the right, away over a nice bit of country, for Priors Hardwick, back to within three fields of Griffin's Gorse, Byfield Reservoir, and Prior's Marston to

the left, over Boddington Hill, and ran into him at Wormleighton. As stout a fox as ever ran before hounds. They ran him for about an hour and thirty-five minutes, and very often they were only a field behind him. A most capital run, a fine line of country, and this gallant Fox never entered a single covert from find to finish. A clinking good day's sport. I think this as fine a run as we have had this season. I rode Pillbox and Brown Stout. 18½ couple, dog pack."

April 8th.—Cowper's Oak. A bad scent. Got Susan killed by the train, no sport, the last day of the season.

1880-81.

1880. Aug. 24th.—Began cub-hunting, hunted forty days, killed twenty-three and half brace of foxes.

Nov. 8th.—Stowe-Nine-Churches. Found several foxes, killed one in the wood, away with one up to the dykes to ground. Found another in Snorscombe Mill Spinney, killed at Moreton Pinkney, a capital fifty minutes. Found in Seawell, a good ring, killed him in Farthingstone.

Dec. 3rd.—Brackley. Found in the gorse, away at once very fast to Radstone without a check, got headed back a field, but hit him off at once through Bartlett's New Covert, Stratford Hill, to Buckingham, to the right over Duke of Buckingham's Avenue to Chackmore, and ran into him near the osier-bed. Went back and drew Westbury Wild, found and killed the fox in Whistley after a good fifty minutes.

"1881. Feb. 4th.—Astwell Mill. Found in Plumpton Wood, away over the grass fields, past Oakley Bank, Greens Park, and Wappenham Station, to Bucknells without dwelling a moment; they ran the ridings, and away to Handley Farm, past Kingthorn Wood to

Bradden, back to Barford's faggot stack. The hounds pulled him out and killed him. A real clipper! all the horses done to a turn. Pillbox carried me well first to Bucknells, pace terrific; but he was so done at Bradden that Mr. Leopold de Rothschild lent me his second horse to finish on. Stovin, the Bicester huntsman, was out, and a large Field besides. 18½ couple bitches, including two couple dogs.

"Feb. 25th.—Whistley Wood. Found after a complete ring round the wood; went away over the brook at the bottom, and hounds ran through Whitfield Coppice to Westbury, and lost him near Stratford Hill. We then found a fox at Brackley Gorse. Away almost before hounds were in at a tremendous pace pointing for Halse; they turned over the bottom, flew along through Mr. Bartlett's Covert to Whitfield and Westbury Wild, and turned short back by Turweston to Greatworth and Farthinghoe, through Cold Ready, Brackley Gorse, away toward Halse, to the left over the Greatworth grass fields, nearly to Cockley Brake; away to Hinton-in-the-Hedges, all through the gardens there, on nearly to Croughton, bore away back nearly to the 'Barley Mow,' and stop'd the hounds running for Evenley Park late in the evening. This has been a most severe day for hounds and horses, all the horses were tired to death; in all directions they were ridden to a standstill. I rode my first horse to a standstill, and my second was so beat that I could scarcely get him home. We changed foxes two or three times. It only wanted a kill to make it one of the finest day's sport I ever saw. I rode Pillbox first and Clansman second, and he carried me magnificently and proved himself to be as stout as steel, although he was quite done, or I think we should have killed our last fox. We viewed him

several times, but with both whips' horses dead beat, I stopped them first chance. I had the bitches out, and they ran remarkably stout. 18½ couple. We had a very large Field out—several from Leicestershire—and many will never forget this great day. Hounds ran very hard all the time, and would have killed two or three foxes had we not changed continually."

1881-82.

1881. Sept. 14th.—Began cub-hunting. Killed a cub in Wicken Spinneys, then a fine old badger, but not without assistance. Hunted twenty days and killed twenty-one cubs.

Nov. 7.—Stowe-Nine-Churches for regular hunting. Found foxes in the wood, and ran to Heyford Iron Works to ground. Found again in Everdon Stubbs, killed at Preston. Found again in Knightley's Wood; ran very hard and could have killed him. Mr. Val. Knightley begged hard for his life. Being so short of foxes we let him escape. I rode Amos and Crisis.

"Dec. 28th.—Wakefield Lawn. Found in Fire Furze; got headed and killed. Found again in Colonel FitzRoy's Covert; ran through Stoke Park, past Plane Woods, across Courteenhall Park, over the brook, down to Northampton, to the left to Huntsbury Hill, to Lady Bridge, Wootton House, and Delapré Park to the right, and ran into him below Queen's Cross. A very fine hunting run; hounds worked admirably."

1882. Jan. 2nd.—Adstone. Found at Ashby, away past Hogstaff and Badby, over Burrough Hill, Dodford Holt, through Mr Craven's Garden, and killed him at Mr. Tibbit's House. An hour and three-quarters, eleven and a half miles—a fine hunting run.

"Jan. 13th.—Wappenham. Found in Astwell Mill

osier-bed, ran very fast to Wappenham, and killed him. Allithorn blank. Hit on the line of an out-lying fox; ran past Sulgrave to Moreton Pinkney, back to Gomerall's Holt; lost him. Found again in Plumpton Wood, away close past Canons Ashby Church towards Eydon, bore away leaving Moreton Pinkney to the left between Gomerall's Holt and Oakley Bank, through Plumpton Wood up to Weston, over Allithorn Brook to Helmdon, nearly to Astwell Mill; they raced up to Weedon and killed him under Mr. Aris' dining-room window. Time one hour and forty minutes; pace good all the way; the best run we have had this season. I rode Thistle all through until we reached Allithorn Brook the last time, when I got my second horse. Only very few were up at the finish. The Duke went well, but his Grace's horse was so tired that he had to walk the last three or four fields. Clansman was my second horse. 19½ couple, bitch pack, six couple and a half dogs included; they worked beautifully.

"Feb. 20th.—Tiffield. Found in the allotments, ran to ground at Blisworth. Found at Easton Gardens, hounds ran at a good pace to Heathencote, pointing for Burcote Wood; they headed short back over Montgomery's Farm, along the Shutlanger brook-side, leaving Cuttle Mill to the left, Paulerspury to the left, Burcote Wood to the right, and away to Silverstone Fields, to the left to Silverstone Village, and then headed back up by the side of the Whittlebury road, through Bucknells, pointing for Wappenham, turning short back into Bucknells; ran him there about ten minutes, and killed him. A real good run, an hour and forty minutes. Rode Crisis and Pillbox; Crisis carried me wonderfully well."

This is the last run that will be recorded of the Grafton Hounds under the Duke's reign.

It was now announced that the Duke of Grafton had decided to retire from the mastership, after hunting the country for twenty years in the most liberal manner. The announcement was received with great regret, and was quite unlooked for in any quarter. During the whole time his Grace had had the staunchest support from all landowners and farmers in the hunt. It had always been the Duke's study to do what lay in his power to help the farmers, and his Grace was a good customer for a hunter in his own hunt. Some of the best horses in the stud were bought of the farmers.

At the end of the season, the Duke called a meeting at Towcester, for the purpose of stating his reason for giving up, which was failing health.

"But remember," he said, "I am going to do all I can to help you after I retire."

A testimonial in the shape of a portrait was offered, but the Duke smilingly said: "I am in too delicate a state of health to undergo the trial of sitting, and I shall be quite satisfied with the continuance of the friendship I have enjoyed for so long."

The Grafton farmers had a great respect for the

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Douglas-Pennant family; and when it became evident that there was no hope of the Duke changing his mind, the Hon. George S. Douglas-Pennant was chosen as Master and asked if he would kindly take office.

A meeting for that purpose took place at Towcester. Mr. Samuel Ayers, of Potcote, proposed, and Messrs. Roper and Bartlett seconded, the resolution, and the people rejoiced in Mr. Douglas-Pennant's acceptance of the office. The new Master was soon at work in buying horses and making plans for carrying out his duties in a fitting manner.

A Poultry Fund was established at once, and has been carried on up to the present time. Mr. Pennant first arranged a luncheon at the Puppy Show, which has been a great success in every way. The Duke had left the hounds in excellent order, and allowed them to occupy the kennels for some years; alas! not for long in his Grace's time; but the present Duke trod in his brother's steps, and permitted them to remain until it was found quite too inconvenient to have the horses standing five miles away; so that after a few years it was decided to move the hounds.

Mr. Robarts, a long and strong supporter of the hunt, put his shoulder to the wheel and soon



GEORGE SHOLTO DOUGLAS-PENNANT.
Second Baron Penrhyn.

bought land and built kennels. Good houses and stabling were erected by many supporters of the hunt, and the whole establishment shows that the Grafton men know what they are about.

Our new Master had the support of all the gentlemen and farmers transferred to him, with a good huntsman and whippers-in, and a capital pack of hounds, and the record which follows will prove that his Mastership was a great success.

It is due to the present Duke of Grafton to mention that he is a diligent preserver of foxes on his large estates and in his numerous coverts ; and, although his Grace has retired from the hunting-field, a fine stud of hunters still occupies those stables which have been so well furnished for generations. The FitzRoy family is ably represented in the field by the Earl of Euston and Lord Alfred FitzRoy.

CHAPTER XII.

FRANK BEERS' DIARIES (*Continued*).

1882-83.

"IN the year 1882, the Honourable George Douglas-Pennant (now the second Baron Penrhyn) undertook the Mastership of the Grafton Hounds, which were kennelled at Wakefield. The horses stood at Towcester.

1882. Sept. 5th.—Commenced cub-hunting; out thirty-four mornings and killed thirty-three foxes.

Nov. 6th.—Began regular hunting at Grafton Regis. Had a famous day which was reported in the *Field*; killed a brace of foxes.

"Nov. 29th.—Castlethorpe. Found in Gayhurst Wood; away to Tattle End, to the right leaving Stoke Goldington Village to the left, over the brook, over Ravenstone Brook; Weston Underwood to the right, up to the Chase, into Ravenstone Wood, straight through the Chase to Warrington and Olney Hyde Farm, to Lavendon Grange, to "Cowper's Oak," over the railroad to Olney, back to Lavendon Grange, and lost him. 20 couple dog-hounds, and they worked capitally. I rode Rossiter and Paragon.

"Dec. 4th. — Preston Capes. Found in Hogstaff directly hounds were in the covert, away at once pointing for Charwelton; turned away for Badby Wood as hard as they could go, straight through the Wood and out at the far end, the men headed him back. The fox ran over the Earths, back through Fawsley Gardens, as if for Hogstaff; they ran nearly to Charwelton road; he did not go over the road, but turned short over the hill nearly to Badby Village and on nearly to Catesby, Staverton just to the left; over the bottom, over Braunston Brook, several came to grief. I was first over; a most lovely country up to Flecknoe Village; turned to the left down to the brook; it was overflowing, and a very wide place. Captain Riddell and I were the first over; the next man had a terrible ducking. We ran away pointing for Staverton Wood, but bore to the right over the road and the brook again, up to Shuckborough Gardens, but did not enter, away pointing for Wolfhamcote, to the right over Braunston Brook again, nearly up to Shuckborough; past Catesby House, towards Charwelton and Hogstaff, but they dusted him along, so he turned to the left, past the Steward's house at Fawsley. Hounds ran him almost in-view, over that big grass field with the round clump in the middle, where they killed him. He just managed to get into the clump, poor fellow! he was most dreadfully tired. Some say it was the same fox we started with, but it looks impossible that one fox could have stood so much work. Time just three and a half hours; found him at 11.30 and killed him at 3 o'clock. I rode Jerry first horse; he carried me magnificently, but had I not met my second horse when I did should have had to stop. He jumped several fences with me after he was tired. I never rode so much good country in one day in my life;

and I put this down to be the best and most satisfactory run I have ever seen. We hardly went into half a dozen ploughed fields during the whole run. We had 19 couples of bitches, and one couple of dogs, making twenty couples. Every hound was there at the finish, and I never saw hounds run and hunt better, or run stouter. I rode Jersey and Comrade.

"1883. Jan. 19th.—Astwell Mill. My first time out after my attack of asthma. Found a fox close to Astwell Pond, away for Wappenham, by Weedon Bushes, past Oakley Bank to Blakesley Hall, Plumpton Wood to the left, to Maidford, lost him there, dead beat. Found another fox in Plumpton Wood, ran by Preston Church Wood through Badby Wood, nearly to Catesby, through Staveton Wood, Daventry to the right, and lost him about half a mile from Braunston Gorse. A capital day's sport, only wanted a kill to have made it A 1.

"Feb. 16th.—Syresham. Found in Whistley Wood, ran fast through Halse Coppice and Cockley Brake, Farthinghoe to the right, to Newbottle, on to Croughton, back to Newbottle; he dodged about some time, and they killed their fox.

"March 2nd. — Astwell Mill. Found in Weedon Bushes, ran by Culworth Village to Edgecote, and killed him—an hour and twenty minutes; ran well together, a capital run. Several Leicestershire gentlemen out, and said it was the best run they had seen this season. Found in Allithorn; away, leaving Colonel Hutchinson's covert to the left, nearly to Astwell Mill up to Helmdon, where they ran into him. About fifty-five minutes. I rode Thistle and Comrade."

April 13th.—Ravenstone, to finish the season. Ran all day without killing a fox; but a very hard day for hounds.

1883-1884.

1883. Sept. 3rd.—The Grafton hounds began cub-hunting ; hunted thirty-one days ; killed thirty-five foxes.

Nov. 5th.—Foster's Booth. Began regular hunting. Found in Bushey End, ringing about all day, and killed a fox.

"Dec. 21st.—Wappenham. Found in Weedon Bushes, away towards Astwell, turned through Weedon Village to Plumpton Wood and Woodend—a capital gallop—and killed. Found in Allithorn ; away past Weston, through Plumpton Wood, and lost the fox near Seawell Grounds. Found in Tite's Coppice, ran towards Astwell Mill, turned back to Wappenham, and killed."

1884. Jan. 11th.—Biddlesden. Found in Whitfield Coppice, ran to ground, bolted him and had a fast ring round Westbury, and killed. Had another fast run from Whistley, and he beat them in some farm-buildings.

Jan. 18th.—Wappenham. Found in Weedon Bushes, ran a short time and killed. Found another in Allithorn, and ran clean into the fox in five fields. Got on the line of a fox from Allithorn, ran through Plumpton, Seawell, and Stowe, down for Weedon, headed back for Church Stowe, and killed him in Mr. Robert's farmyard—one hour and ten minutes without a check ; a nine mile point, very fast all through. Found again in Tiffield, and ran to ground.

"Feb. 15th.—Wappenham. Found in an uncultivated field near Weedon Bushes, away between Weedon Coppice and Village, Oakley Bank to the left, to Woodend ; here we came to a check ; away through Plumpton Wood, Canon's Ashby Church and Louseland to the left, Little Preston on the right, close past the Inn, Preston Capes, straight down the grass fields, leaving Hogstaff

to the right to Fawsley Laurels; did not enter, but ran away, Charwelton osier-bed to the left, over Sharman's Hill to Prior's Marston, away over a most lovely country. Hounds gradually ran from scent to view, and this gallant fox yielded up his brush at Napton-on-the-Hill, after as fine a hunting run, if not the finest, I ever saw; nearly three hours, and over a magnificent country. Many old and young sportsmen who saw it said it was the finest run ever seen by them. Fourteen miles as the crow flies, but probably nearer twenty as hounds ran.

"They touched upon, or crossed," said 'Nimrod' in a contemporary newspaper, "thirteen parishes, and after running clean out of the hunt they traversed the tail-end of the Pytchley and Bicester, and finished in the best part of Warwickshire. A run extending into four Hunts is a very rare occurrence in the annals of fox-hunting."

This was the best long run I ever saw, our noble Master had the head of this fox stuffed, and gave it to me; it hangs over me as I write, as does also the brush of a fox killed by Simpson in the Vale, which gave us the best fifty minutes all over grass I ever rode to. Blacker it could not be, or in better preservation. Both these foxes were vixens and the same foxes with which we started.

J. M. K. E.

"Feb. 22.—Bradden. Found in Tite's Coppice, ran to Bradden Ponds to ground. Found in Plumpton Wood; away through Gomerall's Holt, past Colonel Hutchinson's Covert and Allithorn, Helmdon on the left,

over the railroad, Halse Coppice to the right, to Radstone to ground. Forty-five minutes, fast all the way, and over a very stiff country. Found in Brackley Gorse; away past Crowfield, over Astwell Park, straight through Bucknells to Handley, Kingthorn Wood to the left, all along the line some distance beyond Bradden Ponds, Blakesley to the left, through Maidford Wood to Farthingstone. With difficulty the hounds were stopped by the second whipper-in, who had just come up with his horse which had a gallop left in him, all the others were ridden to a standstill. Mr. T. Whitton lent me his young mare (he having joined us at Blakesley), and took my horse Tenbury to his house from Maidford Wood; he carried me magnificently. A good day's sport. We had a very big Field of strangers. I rode Thistle and Tenbury.

"1884. April 15th.—Finished the season; the best sport we have had for years. I have been wonderfully well mounted, and had but few falls. The whippers-in also had some genuine hunters to ride; no men mounted better."

1884-1885.

1884. Aug. 18th.—Began cubhunting and killed an old badger. Hunted forty-one days, killed forty-seven foxes.

"Dec. 19th.—Astwell Mill. Found in Weedon Coppice, and ran into Plumpton Wood, leaving Gomeral's Holt to the right, back *via* Oakley Bank to Plumpton Wood, out again, leaving Weston to the left, and to ground near the Brickyard; bolted, and killed him. Found in Allithorn, ran past Helmdon and Stuchbury, over Halse road, across Falcote Farm, past Astwell Mill, and stopped the hounds at Greens Park.

"1885. Jan. 19th.—Preston Capes. Found in Church Wood, and away with a capital scent to Snorscombe. Turned to the right over the Maidford road, past Canons Ashby, Moreton Pinkney, ran through Allithorn to Helmdon and Weston, back to Allithorn, losing the fox. Several more on foot. Killed a fox in Tite's Coppice. Away with another to Greens Norton to ground. The run in the morning was a good one; men rode with determination over a capital country. The Field scattered and pulled out miles in length. 18½ bitches. Timepiece carried me well."

Feb. 13th.—Astwell Mill. Found in Allithorn; away at a killing pace to Canons Ashby Gorse; turned short to the right pointing for Maidford, but the fox was headed short back, and hounds fairly ran into him at Adstone. Forty-five minutes at best pace all the way. Found in Plumpton Wood, went past Oakley Bank to Woodend, and lost him. Found in Tite's Coppice, ran to ground at Bradden. Found at Kingthorn Wood, away towards Foscoate, but turned to Blakesley, killing the fox in a cellar. Lords Chesham, Lonsdale, Rocksavage, and fifteen other lords out this day.

"27th.—Brackley. Found in the Gorse, and went away across Steane Park, past Halse Grange and Radstone, to the right over Stuchbury grass enclosures, and ran into an old dog-fox at Greatworth. Fifty minutes at a good pace. Found again in Halse Coppice; away to Helmdon, Allithorn just on the right, to Sulgrave, over the road pointing for the 'Magpie' inn, but bore to the left over Stuchbury Grass, and ran into him close to Mr. Warren's House. Found at Whistley Wood, *a dozen foxes at least*. After four or five turns round the wood, hounds went away straight to Astwell Mill, and on nearly to Wappenham, turned down over the railroad, with

Weedon Bushes just on the right, to Weston Village, over the road to Weston Wild, and they ran fairly into him near Moreton Pinkney. I rode Traveller, Thistle, and Tenbury, three as good and as fine performers as a man could ride. The bitches, 16½ couples.

"1885. Feb. 28th. — Sootfield Green. Found in Wicken Wood; ran into the Forest all about the Wakefield side, then nearly to Wicken Spinneys, down Leckhampstead Fields, short back through Wicken Spinneys to Shrob and Old Stratford, through Passenham osier-bed; they ran over the brook, fast along the meadows, over the river, Beachampton to the left, Furzen Field to the right, over the Nash road, pointing for Whaddon, but turned to the right, up into Nash Village, and killed him in an orchard there. Mr. Lowndes' hounds were drawing Beachampton Grove, and they heard me halloo, 'Whoo-hoop!' and Bentley, the Huntsman, thinking it a 'view halloo,' brought his hounds, and someone told him where he had last seen (our) the fox, but forgot to tell him our pack had gone on as well. Bentley had his hounds on the line of our pack and hunted slowly ('dog hunt dog') up to the very place where we had broken up our fox! Several of our Field had not left the spot, and to their astonishment, found a different huntsman and pack of hounds come on the scene, as they chaffingly said 'to pick up the fragments!' Poor Bentley had to stand no end of 'chaff,' which was not easily digested by him.

"We found again in Wicken Spinneys, ran over the river, through Thornton osier-beds, away up through Furzen Field to Beachampton, back to Thornton and Wicken Spinneys, stopped them at dark. A very hard day for hounds. I rode Paragon and Jenny Jones. The dog pack, 17 couples.

"March 30th.—Paulerspury. Water Hall blank, also Easton. Found in the Rifle-butt clump of laurels. Away at a rattling pace close on his back, past Tiffeld Reformatory Gorse, leaving Tiffeld on the right, Caldecote to the right, Mr. Ridgway's gardens just to the left, Greens Norton Mill to the right, along the brookside at best pace; Bradden on the right, South Fields and Oakley Bank just to the right, close past the top corner of Gomerall's Holt, Moreton Pinkney on the right, as straight to Eydon Main Earths as they could run, and at a killing pace. The fox just saved his life; another mile would have been the death of him. A better run I never rode to in my life; eleven and a half miles as the proverbial crow flies. Time, one hour and ten minutes. I rode Traveller, and he carried me capitally. There were a great many falls. Two ladies went well, Miss Tennant and Mrs. Bunbury; they both had falls, the latter was hurt so did not get above half-way. We had the Eydon Brook to jump for the last obstacle, seven of us jumped it on rather pumped-out horses. Found again in Canons Ashby ponds, away to ground at Woodford Hill. Found again in Canons Ashby Gorse, away leaving Louseland just to the left, Preston to the right, Charwelton to the left, over Sharman's Hill, and lost him late in the evening going away for Staverton. I rode Traveller, Comrade, and Rossiter."

April 16th.—The Kennels to finish the season.

1885-86.

"1885. Aug. 20th.—Commenced cub-hunting. Out forty-five mornings, killed fifty-four foxes.

"Nov. 9th.—Met at Woodford. Found foxes in Hinton Gorse, ran to a drain to ground one field from

the covert. Found again in the gorse, they ran him to the same drain, he thought he would get back to the gorse, but they killed him before he could do so. Found again at Charwelton osier-bed, away pointing for Fawsley, but they pressed him so hard that he made a ring and they went back to Charwelton as hard as they could go; away again, leaving Fawsley to the right, over the Banbury road for Sharman's Hill; short back to within a field of Fawsley Gardens, again he went to the left over the road for Staverton, up to Badby House, across the park, a ring over the country beyond, back through Staverton Wood, into the gardens at Badby House, and we killed in the field adjoining. Found again in Hogstaff, soon killed him. Away with another to Church Wood, through Fawsley into Badby Wood, and stopped them going back to Fawsley. A better scenting day I never remember, no horse could have lived with them with the second fox. I rode Tenbury and Miriam.

" 1886. Feb. 17:—My first appearance after my accident (dislocated and fractured shoulder at Farthingstone on December 14th). Found in Stratford Hill; away past Shalstone Coppice, to Gorrell Farm, ran him fast to the homestead; never could make more out of him, until too late; after we left they found him in the hen-roost! Shalstone Spinneys and Westbury Wild blank; found in Whitfield Wood; they ran hard in the wood, away through Shalstone Coppice, to Mr. Higgins's osier-bed, and ran into him in the open.

" Feb. 23.—Badby House, by special invitation. It was a sharp frost with snow lying on the ground. We put the hounds on the train at Towcester, and went to Byfield Station. When we arrived at Badby House I never

saw such a number of pedestrians at a meet of foxhounds before. A very large Field of horsemen as well, including several Masters of hounds and professional Huntsmen. G. Carter, of the Fitzwilliam; Grant, from Sir Bache Cunard's; Goodall, from the Pytchley. We drew Staverton Wood blank. Found in one of the small coverts adjourning; went away, five hundred or more 'view-halloos' greeting him! As straight as he could go he ran to Charwelton, on beyond made a wide ring, and got to ground near Charwelton House. Found in Badby Wood, went away through the village, back towards Preston, lost him. It was hardly fit for hunting; gave it up.

"March 22.—Foxley. Found in Bushey End, and went away at a capital pace down to Foxley, and through Grimscote Heath; turned away past Lichborough, over the bottom, through Seawell Wood and Maidford, along the brookside pointing for Canons Ashby; over the Preston road, and back through Burnfold; away pointing for Farthingstone, and ran into him in Lichborough Park. A capital gallop. Found again in Tite's Coppice, a vixen ran to Bradden; lost her. Found in Astcote Thorns, ran to Grimscote Heath, back, and lost him near Astcote Thorns. Found in Tiffield Allotments; ran very fast, leaving Nun Wood on the left, to Easton and lost.

"March 29.—Preston Capes. A very stormy morning; found in Hinton Gorse, away to Byfield in a blinding storm of hail and rain, lost him. Found in Fawsley Gardens, away through Church Wood, Mantel's Heath, Everdon Stubbs, to Stowe; killed him. Found in plantation by Mr Hurley's, ran through Stowe Wood, over the hill for Weedon, up to Everdon Stubbs, and killed him." (No further record this season.)

1886-87.

1886.—Cub-hunting on thirty-eight mornings; killed forty-eight foxes.

“Nov. 8th.—Regular hunting. Found in Hinton Gorse; away towards Byfield, soon lost him. Found again in Charwelton osier-bed; ran away by Fawsley to Badby Wood, up to Preston, to the corner of Mantel's Heath; turned short back over the Everdon Brook, away over the hill, the fox dead beat, to the corner of Fawsley Park, top corner of Badby Wood, to ground in a small rabbit-hole; got him out, and killed him. Found in Hogstaff, ran to Burnfold, lost him. Found our hunted fox again in Maidford Wood, ran him a ring or two in Seawell, and killed him on the Earths.

“Nov. 12th.—Syresham. Found in Whistley Wood, away to Wappenham, over the brook, leaving Weedon Bushes just to the right, straight through Allithorn, Helmdon, with Astwell Mill on the right, over Wappenham Brook, Weedon Bushes on the right, pointing for Oakley Bank, Gomeral's Holt to the right, and ran into him two fields from Weston. Hounds ran at a great pace all the time, and beat the horses all through, running into their fox before any horseman got to them. I was first up on Thistle, and nothing remained of the fox but half his head. One hour and forty minutes. A large Field out, and many falls. Horses much distressed; a real good run. Found again in Weedon Bushes; away to Plumpton Wood, lost him. Found in Tite's Coppice, ran to ground at Bradden in an earth close to Mr. Goodman's House.

“Nov. 15th.—Foster's Booth. Drew Drayson's osiers and Mr. Hurley's covert blank. Found in Stowe Wood, away over the hill towards Weedon; ran away up

the valley to Everdon Stubbs; back through Stowe Wood to Weedon, and killed the fox in the clergyman's garden there. We went on, and found in Grub's Coppice; ran in the gorse, turned short back, and away at best pace, leaving Foxley just to the right, Blakesley Hall just to the left, through lower coppice at Plumpton, as hard as hounds could race, leaving Gomerall's Holt to the left, to within a field of Weston Village. Then they turned over the road, leaving Colonel Hutchinson's covert to the left, pointing for Culworth, bore away over the bottom, leaving Sulgrave Village on the right, over Stuchbury fields, to the further coppice, over the railway, pointing for Halse Coppice. Here such a heavy storm of rain came on, almost washing us off our horses, and just saved the fox's life. He got to ground on the railway bank at Greatworth. The run was all up wind, and the pace tremendous.

"Nov. 17th. Wicken Village. Found in Park Coppice; ran through all the Spinneys to Dagnell, and killed him on the land between Deanshanger and the river. Found another fox in some turnips close by; ran up to the village, headed back, ran the meadows, over the brook, crossed the river close to Passenham, as hard as they could go, pointing for Oakhill Wood; turned to the right through Beachampton Grove, pointing for Whaddon; turned under Nash, to Furzen Field, and ran into him one field from Nash Brake. Found again in Foxcote Wood, lost him in Akeley Village. Found in Leckhampstead Wood, finished there at dark.

"Nov. 19th.—Adstone. Found in Canons Ashby Gorse, and ran down to the ponds—one ring; then on, pointing for Ganderton, bore to the right, leaving Louseland on the left, close past Little Preston, Farthingstone on the left, to Lichborough Bottom, then up over

the hill to Stowe Wood, did not enter; ran up to the small covert between Mr. Hurley's covert and Church Stowe, where we had him in view. Hounds ran him through Stowe Wood back to Hurley's covert, and killed him. Best pace for fifty-five minutes, and nearly four miles. Only myself, Edward, my second whip, G. Elliott, and a steeplechase gentleman-rider, viz., "Bonnetty Bob," were with them. The country was a stiff one.

Found in a small patch of gorse between Canons Ashby and Plumpton; they raced him away in view to Plumpton Wood. A brace of foxes went away from Plumpton, and they ran one to ground at Woodend, and the other to Blakesley Hall; back to ground in a drain, close to the railway arch by Plumpton Wood, bolted him, and he went to ground under the riding in Plumpton Wood; gave it up. I rode Thistle and Comrade.

"1886. Nov. 20.—Horton. Found in Brayfield Furze. Hounds went away at a great pace through the Chase, across the middle of the Deer Park, through Collier's Earn and Horton Gardens; the fox swam the pond through Horton Wood, and was run to ground at Eakley Lane. We bolted him, and ran back to ground at Horton, near the pond. Found again in Ravenstone Wood, away to Weston Underwood; a ring back, leaving Ravenstone Village on the right, over the drain at Eakley Lane, through Horton Wood, ran just outside, and on to Warrington Spinney; then back, leaving Weston Underwood on the left, over the road pointing for the river, turned up and ran to ground just under Weston Underwood, after one hour and forty minutes—as good a run as I ever saw on that side of the country. Best pace all through. Pulled up the sluice, and out

came the fox; we killed him in the same meadow. I rode Rossiter and Jenny Jones, and stopped the Field on the latter over a stone wall, under Weston Underwood, just before he ran to ground. A really grand day's sport, and never did I see the dog-hounds to better advantage. 22 couples.

"Nov. 24.—Castlethorpe. Found at Mr. Knapp's, lost him at Lincoln Lodge. Found another fox at Bunstye Wood; ran to ground close to Jarvis's Wood; bolted him, and ran at a clipping pace through Horton Wood, over the railway into Collier's Earn, out directly to Horton Rifle-Butts, along by the Chase for some distance; turned away, leaving Brayfield Furze on the left, as straight as he could go to Cooknoe Spoil Banks, ran into him two fields beyond, below the village of Cooknoe, after a good fifty minutes. There was no scent during the fore part of the day, but it was better in the afternoon. Rode Tenbury and Paragon.

"Nov. 26.—Brackley. A very large Meet of both ladies and gentlemen. Found directly we entered the gorse; ran through Gooseholme to Hinton-in-the-Hedges, and killed at Croughton Covert; hounds ran like flying all the way. Found again in Brackley Gorse, and ran away pointing for Brackley Union, but turned short back over the grass at best pace to Halse Grange, where they ran him into Mr. King's farmyard and killed. Found in Halse Coppice, away close under Radstone to Whistley; ran hard there, and several foxes on foot. At last away to Biddlesden Home Wood to within one hundred yards of Whitfield Wood, made a ring back nearly to Biddlesden, over the brook, through the fir plantation, over the brook as hard as hounds could go to Whitfield. We changed foxes at the coppice; ran like mad back to Biddlesden Gardens, lost him, and gave

it up. A good scenting day; many falls and tired horses.

"Nov. 27th.—The Kennels. Fire Furze and Grafton Park blank. We found in Waterslade, away through Cattle Hill into Paulerspury Fields, across Sholebrook to Whittlebury and Sholebrook Lodge, killed close to the back-kitchen door. Found another fox in Briary, away through Cattle Hill close past Sholebrook, over the Rookery at Whittlebury, straight through Bucknells to Abthorpe, over the brook, ran by the railway some distance; then, pointing for Kingthorn Mill, turned over Handley Fields, and lost the fox at dusk on Lord's Fields Farm. A capital hunt. Another fifteen minutes' daylight would have brought him to hand. Hounds hunted beautifully.

"Nov. 29th.—Green's Norton. Found in Grimscote Heath, and ran to ground in a drain under the Foxley road. Found again in Tite's Coppice; ran down to Bradden, over the road to Abthorpe, turned away parallel with the railroad, turned to the left, leaving Kingthorn Wood on the right, went through Bradden Ponds, over the brook, leaving Blakesley on the left, Foxley to the left, through Grub's Coppice, through Lichborough Coppice and Grimscote Heath to the village, past the Downs Farm, pointing for Lichborough, turned short to the right through Rodmere, and ran into him fairly in the open between there and the Weedon and Towcester road. An hour and ten minutes; no end of falls, over a stiff country he ran. Drayson's osier-bed and Tiffeld Allotments blank, gave it up. Bitch pack, 23 couples.

"1887. Feb. 4th.—Wappenham. Found in Plumpton Wood, away to Adstone over the Maidford Brook, through Seawell Wood to Bushey End, where he waited

for us; away on good terms through Grimscote Heath, the village on the right, Cold Higham just on the right, Cornhill to the left, to Bugbrook Downs, on to Gayton, and killed him. Found in Nun Woods; down to Shutlanger, turned short to the right, through the Rifle-Butts Spinney, over the Towcester road to Tiffield, back to Blisworth Gardens and Roper's Gorse, and lost him late in the afternoon. 21 couple bitches.

"Feb. 7th.—Woodford. Found in Hinton Gorse, ran well in covert for about twelve minutes, and killed him almost directly. Hounds were on another, and away like pigeons; they flew to Hinton, and ran the fox to ground in a drain in a grass field beyond, which is in the Bicester country. Another fox was halloo'd, over the Byfield road, away nearly to Griffin's Gorse, headed back to Hinton, and lost him. Killed one fox in a pond at Charwelton, and he sank almost directly. Found again in one of the spinneys near to Charwelton; ran nearly to Fawsley Laurels, back to Charwelton, and killed him. Found another; they ran him all about those big grass fields for twenty minutes, and killed him. Found another; they ran him over the same ground, then over Sharman's Hill, back to ground in Fawsley Laurels, dead beat; and to ground in view. Found another in Hogstaff; away over the Preston road, pointing for Louseland, past Little Preston, through Mantel's Heath, Hen Wood, to Mill Spinney, Fawsley, where he went to ground in a drain. Good scent.

"Feb. 14th.—Little Preston. Found in Badby Wood, came across Fawsley Park, and lost him. Found at Ganderton. Away at a good pace, through Canons Ashby Gorse and Little Preston, leaving Church Wood on the left, through Hogstaff, away back by Preston

Capes brickyard, Ganderton on the right, to Canons Ashby Ponds, not two hundred yards in front of the hounds between Canons Ashby and Eydon on Crockwell Farm. Found another fox in the gorse between Canons Ashby and Plumpton; away close at him they ran, in view, to Plumpton Wood, through the Lower Coppice back to Adstone, to Canons Ashby, through the Ponds, away over Crockwell Farm, pointing for Woodford Village, turned short to the right, Ganderton to the left, to ground under the road on Woodford Hill, close to Mr. Ward's house. Poked him out with a pole, and away they raced him through Ganderton along the flat, and ran into him going for Woodford. A capital day's sport.

"Feb. 21st.—Stoke Plain. Found in Stoke Bruerne Park; ran away round the covert once, and killed him; he was headed into the hounds' mouths. Found again in a hedge close to Ashton Spinney, away down by side of the river, pointing for Bozenham Mill, over by the old ford, away all by themselves. Hounds ran hard all along the Alderton Meadows, over the brook, past Shutlanger Grove, through Rifle-Butts Spinney to the Reformatory, close at him, dead-beat. Unfortunately a fresh fox jumped up before them, and away they ran; there was no stopping them, past Tiffield, over to Caldecote, to Astcote Village; short back to within a field of the Allotments, through the Reformatory Gorse, back to Easton Neston, and lost him. Found again in Plane Woods, away through Nun Wood to Roper's Gorse, back by Blisworth to Nun Wood, Plane Woods, and Roade Cutting, where three hounds went over, unhurt; back to Shutlanger, and Bozenham Mill to the new Covert, Grafton, and stopped them at Alderton. No one left with the hounds but Lord Euston

and myself. I had my third horse ; one of the hardest days I ever saw for hounds and horses. Hounds were running their hardest nearly the whole day ; all went home with their sterns up, and fed well. I rode Prince Charlie, Miriam, and Paragon. 22 couple of bitches.

" March 4th.—Adstone. Found in Canons Ashby Gorse ; away to the Ponds, over the hill, and lost him on Woodford Hill. Found again in Ashby Ponds, killed one, and away with another to ground just under Eydon, in a drain under the East and West Railway. Found next in Plumpton Wood, over the Lane, and down for Canons Ashby ; I put my horse Thistle at a very wide place, when a lady and gentleman crossed me, and my good horse was put out of his stride, so jumped short, fell backwards, and broke his back. Thistle was one of the very best hunters I ever rode. The only horse I ever had an accident with, after hunting hounds for twenty-five years.

1887-88.

1887.—Began cub-hunting on Monday, August 29th. Hunted twenty-nine mornings, killed forty-four foxes.

" Oct. 19th.—Easton Neston at 11.30. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, staying with Sir Thomas Hesketh for the week, hunted with the Grafton. Drew Water Hall, Rifle-Butt Spinney, blank. Found in Nun Wood ; went away to Shutlanger and Stoke Bruerne, and ran into the fox one field from Plane Woods. Sir Thomas Hesketh's children were out ; one had the head, the other the brush (both blooded). Drew Stoke Park, Heathencote, Burcote Wood, Sholebrook, all blank. Found in the forest, hunted till dark."

Nov. 7th.—Regular hunting began.

" Nov. 12th.—Bozenham Mill. Found several foxes

in Grafton Covert, away at a rattling pace to Alderton down to the meadows, through Stoke Gardens, along the bottom towards Shutlanger, to a drain which was stopped; turned short to the right, through Stoke Park up to Stoke Church, across the Allotments, Shutlanger just to the right, over the bottom, Shutlanger Grove on the left. We crossed the brook, over Mr. Montgomery's Farm, through Mr. Nickson's Garden, by "Park View," down his meadows, over the park wall at Towcester Town end, ran along the enclosure at the back of Towcester, up to Burcote Wood; through Porter's Wood, Long Hedge, with Sholebrook on the right, to the Paulerspury end of Sholebrook Lawn, as hard as hounds could run, straight across Sholebrook Lawn, over the Park, up to Sir Robert Loder's house, and killed our fox just in front of it. A capital run, and most of the time hounds ran really hard. An hour and thirty-five minutes.

"Found in the Hassatt (Forest), away at once with a clinking good scent; Potterspury on the right, as straight as he could go to Cosgrove, over the canal and river to the Rectory Gardens at Wolverton; here they caught view of him and raced him past Wolverton Mill, along the riverside, and nearly to Stony Stratford Bridge, over the river and canal to Cosgrove; away to Furtho and Potterspury Cemetery, across the road to Puxley, where they ran from scent to view, and ran into him between Puxley Green and Shrob. An hour and ten minutes, as good as could be. I never was out on a more perfect hunting day; the best day this season so far. I rode Conqueror, Paragon, and Jenny Jones. 23 couple dog-pack.

"Nov. 28th.—Preston Capes. Found in Hogstaff, ran straight through Badby Wood, the village on the

left, then to Daventry Town end, to the right over Newnham fields, towards Weedon, along the Meadows, nearly to Everdon Village, over the Brook through Everdon Stubbs, Snorscombe Mill, and Badby Wood, over, round, away again past Newnham, to ground in the Earths at Daventry. A capital run. Found again in the Laurels at Fawsley; hounds flew towards Charwelton, turned sharp to the left, as hard as ever I saw them go, then to Hogstaff to ground in an old tree. I rode four-year-old (Hollywood), Prince Charming, and Comrade. 22½ bitches.

" 1888. Feb. 10th.—Whitfield. In Radstone Fields got on the line of a fox, ran him past Brackley Union, down the railway, nearly to Brackley Station; turned away for Hinton-in-the-Hedges, to the left over the 'Barley-Mow' road, to the Halls; lost him in a very unsatisfactory manner; got into a hole somewhere, no doubt; from the pace hounds ran he must have been completely pumped out. Found at Halse Coppice, went away over the road for Helmdon; the fox turned quite short to Radstone and thence to Brackley Grange Farm; bore away back to Halse, over the bottom, Whistley on the right, to Falcote, Astwell Mill, about a field-and-a-half on the left; down to Wappenham; and killed him in the village. One hour and fifteen minutes; as good a run as one wants to see; and over a very stiff country. 19½ couple bitches. I rode Tom Moody and Miriam.

" March 14th.—Blisworth Station. Found in Tiffeld Allotments, away pointing for Roper's Gorse, turned over the railway, Gayton Village just on the right, pointing for Eastcote; to the left, as if for Tiffeld, over the road to Duncote; lost him near Bushey End. Found again in Easton Neston Gardens; at a rattling pace they

ran, through first covert, Plane Woods, down to Blisworth Ironworks, over the canal to Blisworth Station, short back to the village, Roper's Gorse on the right, to Tiffield Allotments; raced him from that covert, in view, to the Northampton and Blisworth road; two fields beyond made a ring, pointing for Nun Wood, back to Blisworth over the canal at the tunnel mouth to the Roade Cutting. Stopped the hounds; the fox dead-beat. I saw him walk up the cutting and lie down in the six-foot way; a train came past him, which he took not the slightest notice of; two plate-layers came and buffeted him with their caps before he would get up, he then trotted before them back out of the cutting, and climbed up the embankment; when half-way up he was so tired that he lay down again, and was obliged to be put up by the second whipper-in. When fairly off the railway he made such a poor go that the hounds went and knocked him over as he was in a walk, so terribly dead-beat.

"Found in Stoke Park, ran to the garden, and killed him, very mangy. Gave it up. I rode Prince Charming and Jenny Jones. The dog-pack worked capitally. 18½ couples.

"March 25th.—Owing to deep snow hounds did not meet till 12.30. Found foxes in Stowe Wood; they ran there for thirty-five minutes with a good scent, and killed a dog fox. Found a good fox in Snorscombe osier-bed, away on very good terms through Hen Wood and Little Preston Wood, bore away to the right of the village, straight to the top corner of Hogstaff; did not enter the covert, went on as straight as a line to Fawsley Church, over the Waterfall, up to the left-hand corner of Badby, not dwelling in the least; ran fast through the wood and out at the right-hand corner,

down Newnham Vale, over the hill through Upper Weedon, over the brook, and on nearly to the top corner of Everdon Stubbs. The fox was headed back and met the hounds, they ran him in view down the hill again, then bore away over the hill for Weedon, and into Stowe Wood, and killed him after an hour and five minutes without any check, hounds running very hard all the way. The best run of the season. After trying Maidford Wood, Seawell Wood, Grimscore Heath, Grub's Coppice, and Bushey End, all blank, gave it up.

"March 31st.—Tile House. Found in Stowe Ridings, and killed him. Then found at Hop-yard, a brace of foxes, stopped them from running the vixen; got them on to the dog fox, which had got a good start, they rattled along through Hatch Woods to Biddlesden, over the brook nearly to Whistley Wood, turned short to the right, leaving Syresham and Crowfield on the left, over the road running by the side of the Towcester road for some distance, and at last hounds bore to the left by the side of the brook, over it—a good jump—past Syresham Windmill to Astwell Park; turned to the right to Thomas's Wood, through Bucknells, past Charlock Farm, down to Handley to the railway at Green's Norton; through Kingthorn Wood to Bradden, along the bottom to Slapton, through Bucknells, Crown Lands, Hatch Woods, Biddlesden Wood and Park, and killed him in Biddlesden Gardens. Three and a half hours; for hound work I think it was the best hunting run I ever saw. Dog-pack with a few bitches—17½ couples.

1888-89.

1888.—During cub-hunting killed twenty-eight foxes.

"Nov. 12th.—Stowe-Nine-Churches. Found in Everdon Stubbs; ran a line to the Lodge on Banbury and

Daventry road leading to Fawsley, where a brute of a dog turned the fox back to Badby Wood; ran through it and over the brook, lost him through a shepherd's dog running the fox; we could never make any more of him. Found again in Mill Spinney, and ran to ground close to Badby Wood. Hit on the line of another fox at Hogstaff, hunted him to Preston, and gave up late in the afternoon. Rode Conqueror and Tom Moody.

"Nov. 26th.—Woodford. Found a good fox in Hinton Gorse. After dwelling in covert with a bad scent hounds went away. Out of covert the scent was as good as one wants to see. They ran capitally away to Charwelton road, and over the hill to within one hundred yards of Griffin's Gorse; away over a beautiful bit of country at best pace to ~~Prior's~~ Marston, Hellidon on the right, down the valley pointing for Shuckburgh, bore away to the right, and ran into the fox about four fields from Badby. Fifty-five minutes, as good, if not better than I ever saw in that country. Lord Spencer was out, he rode as hard and as well as anyone. We then found a fox in Parson's Gorse, near to Charwelton, he ran in a bee-line to Catesby to ground. Found again in Charwelton osier-bed, ran hard towards Hinton, short back, hounds close at him, ran him into a hovel, and killed him. Found again in the Mill osier-bed, by the brook-side, and ran nearly to Ganderton Spinney, then turned short to the left up to Preston Church Wood, where the fox was headed, and ran for Louseland; he did not enter the covert, and hounds ran through the grass-fields at Preston Capes, where we meet; Little Preston Wood was on the right; a big ring back to Hogstaff, to Preston Church Wood; had him in view here, but he got away, raced towards Snorscombe,

turned through Mantel's Heath, without dwelling, through Everdon Stubbs, towards Farthingstone, ran under Hurley's House, down the hill again, nearly to Rodmere, up the hill again to Stowe-Nine-Churches, left-handed, nearly to Church Stowe, through Heyford Grange Garden, hounds and fox all there together; out towards the Iron-Furnace, to Mr. Hardy's along by the Railroad, turned over it to Bugbrook, a flock of sheep caused the hounds to check. I gladly stopped them, my horse had had quite enough, and everybody's horse was tired out, and it was nearly dark at 4.45. Baron de Tuyl got a fearful fall into the Charwelton Road, and frightfully disfigured his face.

"Nov. 20th.—Horton. Found in Brayfield Furze, a very fine old dog-fox. Without any dwelling he ran as straight as a line could be drawn on the map to Wellingborough Station (we found him in the middle covert); away, leaving Denton on the right, Whiston on the left, across Castle Ashby Park, close by Wellingborough Mill to Great Doddington Village, pointing for Wilby; made a ring and back, ran into him in a forty-acre field; one hour and forty-five minutes. A superb line of country. Being a good twenty-six miles from home, Lord Penrhyn decided not to draw again.

"Dec. 6th.—I followed to his last resting-place poor Mr. Arkwright, M.F.H. of the Oakley. He was the first who ever taught me to hold a double-reined bridle; it was entirely through him that I ever went to hounds.

"December 17th.—Preston Capes. Found in Church Wood, ran fast in a ring to ground at Newnham. Found again in the same wood; ran to Little Preston, down to Maidford Brook, like pigeons; turned to the right to Ganderton's, on to Woodford leaving Hinton Gorse to

the left, to Mill Spinney, Fawsley Gardens, across the Park, leaving Badby Wood to the right, over Newnham Brook to Staverton, ran into him within a mile of Daventry, killing him by the light of the moon after an hour and ten minutes' hunting. 21 couple of bitches; all in at the death.

"Dec. 26th.—Chackmore. Found in Shalstone Spinney; away to Westbury, and lost him. Found again at Whitfield Wood and ran to Shalstone, Stowe, nearly to Water Stratford to Shalstone Park; back through Stratford Hill, pointing for Stowe, short to the left, as hard as hounds could go, to Three Parks. Leaving that covert on the left, they ran at best pace to Boycott Manor, through the Gardens by Buffler's Holt, Radcliffe to the left, Tingewick on the right, by Chetwode to Twyford, away by Three-Bridge Mill to the corner of Claydon Woods; away to Hillesden, and down to Preston Bassett, up to Goddington Mill. When I came up with the hounds some were on one side of the river and some on the other. With difficulty we got them away, it being 5.50 o'clock, and, of course, dark. We could not tell what had happened until next day, when it was proved that the fox had been killed—their fox: he sank, and was fished out next day. This was an extraordinary run; for nearly an hour hounds went capitally, almost in the dark. It was a beautiful starlight night; no chance of stopping them. We rode by ear, having a capital pilot in a young farmer, Mr. Barge, of Hillesden, who knew every inch of the country. Had it not been for him we should have left the hounds out. Only Lord Penrhyn, Mr. E. Pennant, myself, and Mr. Barge, were left at the finish. The whipper-ins' horses being tired, they joined us on the road home. We reached the kennels at eight o'clock.

"1889. 21st. Jan.—Met at Stoke Plain. Found in Stoke Park Wood; away almost directly, by Shutlanger Grove, crossed the brook, and up to Heathencote, did not cross the road, on by Bishop's, Druce's, Franklin's, and Linnell's farms, through Waterslade, across the Lawn, across Briary, over Mr. Elliott's Farm, Lovell's Wood, to Tile House; killed just in front of the house. All the Field were entertained sumptuously by Mr. A. J. Robarts. We then drew Water Hall, Easton, and Nun Woods, all blank. Found at Tiffield, and away over the Northampton Road to Nun Wood, and Plane Woods, back at a tremendous pace to the Allotments, Eastcote, Astcote Thorns, and back to Caldecote, where we stopped them running. A famous day.

"Jan. 28th.—Adstone. Found in a stubble field, and ran away to Canons Ashby Gorse, after a good run to ground in a drain near the railway, by Canons Ashby; bolted a fresh fox out of the drain, and away as hard as they could race to Adstone; a good run to Heathencote Plantation, to ground in the earths there. One of the most severe days for hounds I ever remember, and hard luck they did not catch a fox. 17½ couple bitches, all up at the finish.

"April 8th.—Horton. Found in Brayfield Furze, and ran away to the Chase, and on to ground in a drain between Bozeat and Harrold Park. Very fast all the way, away from all the horses, not more than four or five of us could live with them. Being out of our country we had to leave him; we had just reached Horn Wood, and the fox came out of his own accord; a man gave a view halloo. We were soon on his line, and they raced away towards Harrold Village, and on to Culworth, the seat of Mr. Magniac, M.P., where the fox went to ground in a big rabbit hole. A young

farmer, Mr. Townsend, was riding by my side when he viewed the fox dead-beat almost in view of the hounds ; the fox went to ground when another three or four hundred yards would have made a glorious finish to one of the best woodland days ever seen on that side of the country. I never was more certain of killing a fox ; we could feel him quite plainly with a stick."

1889-90.

Sept. 2nd.—Began cub-hunting at Redmere, and finished Nov. 9th, at Stratford Hill, killing thirty-three foxes.

1889. Nov. 11th.—Began regular hunting, much stopped by frost.

" Dec. 9th.—Maidford. Found in Bushey End, ran to Astcote Thorns, across the Turweston Road to Eastcote, lost him. Found in Astcote Thorns, away to Potcote, a ring by Grimscote Heath, the village to left, past Potcote, to ground in sand holes near Caswell. Found at Tite's Coppice, ran into Taylor's Spinneys, nearly to Blakesley ; crossed the road to Bradden Ponds, turned up to the village, Greens Park to the right, ran between Wappenham and Weedon Coppice, close past Astwell Mill, up to Falcote, turned to the right, and ran up to Helmdon Village, and lost him. A person was in the road with three greyhounds ; he declared he never saw our fox (?) we could never touch on him afterwards. This was really a capital run. George Barrett, the jockey, was out, and went well. He got an awful cropper over some rails at Bradden and very nearly in Wappenham Brook. Captain Elmhirst's horse was in for two hours. Mr. Fuller was also in. I rode Falcon and Sunshine. 24 couple bitches.

"1889. Dec. 16th.—Preston Capes. Found in Church Wood; ran to Hogstaff and back, away to Louseland, Gandertons, and back to Hogstaff to ground. Found in the Laurels at Fawsley, ran to Badby, out of there, and back to Hogstaff again, into Badby, where hounds stuck to their fox well and killed him. Found again in Parson's Gorse; they ran like mad to Charwelton Church, and short back to Fawsley, and killed him on the front doorstep at Fawsley House. Found again in Kingthorn Wood, away pointing for Rodmere; turned up to Lichborough on the left, Seawell and Maidford Wood, and the Village, all on the left, Adstone to the right, to Canons Ashby Gorse, across Moreton Pinkney fields, through Gomerall's Holt, and stopped hounds at Weedon, going for the bushes. All the horses were done, and a brace of foxes in front of us. The best day of the season, so far, a capital scenting day. 22½ bitches.

"1890. Jan. 11th.—Horton. Found in Salcey Forest, ran a short time, and killed a fox. Found again, ran away leaving Stoke Goldington Park on the right, then to Ravenstone Village, up to Yardley Chase. Stopped owing to shooting. Found in Stoke Goldington Park, ran to Salcey, a ring there; a good scent! Out by the Bull Head, Jarvis's Wood to the left. In Stoke Goldington Park, hounds ran almost the same ring again, and, getting up to the fox, ran harder than ever to Bunstye Wood and Gayhurst Wood, through Linford Wood, by Hanslope House, on to the village; ran him back, in view, to Hanslope Park, and killed in a small plantation close to the house. A capital woodland day. I rode Falcon and Topsy. 20½ couple of dogs.

"1890. Jan. 27th.—Stoke Plain. Found in Plane Woods, and away at a rattling pace to Easton Park,

back through the Gardens to Nun Wood and Plane Woods, and to the cutting at Roade, where the hounds all went over, I got down with both whippers-in and ran with the pack through the Cutting northwards. Two express trains being due, we expected the hounds to be cut to pieces every minute, but we managed to get out of the dreadful place just in time. Two trains, one each way, dashed through half a minute after we had got the hounds out! I never had such an anxious time I think. All's well that ends well; for we finished the day with the best run I ever saw on that side of the country. After this we found our hunted fox in Tiffield Allotments, and soon killed him. Found our next fox in Nun Wood, and, after a clipping run, killed at old Wolverton. Only about a dozen got to the end, including two ladies; one, Mrs. George Barrett, the jockey's wife, had the brush.

"April 5th.—Hartwell. Found in Ash Leys Gorse, and went away rapidly towards Courteenhall Grange, turned short to the left, and ran at best pace to Courteenhall Church; headed down the Park northwards, in view; hounds ran hard to Quinton, up to Salcey Forest, through the clears and across the Lawn, into and through both Horton Woods, Ravenstone Wood to the left, down the fields towards Ravenstone, back to the Chase, away again, over the open, down to Ravenstone Village, and ran into him in the village grocer's shop, and killed him there. As we were running by Ravenstone Wood, we met the Oakley Hounds, running the reverse way: we were at the same time at one end of the field, they at the other! Lord Spencer, Goodall, his huntsman, and Isaac, the first whipper-in, were out. It proved rather a lucrative business for the old lady who kept the shop, for Lord Penrhyn and Lord Spencer, besides

giving her something, purchased all the oranges and biscuits in the shop, which to my knowledge were very acceptable, for the sun was as hot as in July. We drew Stoke Goldington Park blank. Found in Salcey Forest, had seven minutes as hard as hounds could run, to ground in an old tree. A good day for the time of year. Mixed pack, 19½ couples. I rode the Leamington mare and Comrade.

"April 12th. — Castle Ashby Lodges. Found in covert, Easton Wood; ran to Upper Wood, away to Easton Horn Wood to Easton Maudit, through Horn Wood, back to Easton Wood, to the Chase, crossed the Deer Park to Denton side to Brayfield Furze; left it to the left, down to Brayfield-on-the-Green, short back to the right of Denton Village, through Collier's Earn to Cowper's Oak side, and killed a fine old dog-fox. We ran about two hours. Found in Salcey Forest, ran to Preston Deanery, past Piddington up to Brayfield Furze, through the Chase for Weston Underwood, away up to Cowper's Oak side of the Chase. Stopped the hounds late in the evening. It was a good hound day, and, considering the hard ground everywhere, as dry as chips, the hounds pleased me very much. A large Field out, including several M.F.H.'s; some of them brought their huntsmen and whippers-in. I rode the Leamington Mare and Sunshine."

Lord Penrhyn . . . *Master.*

Frank Beers . . . *Huntsman.*

Tom Smith . . . *First Whipper-in.*

Tom Bishopp . . . *Second Whipper-in.*

At the end of the Season, 1889-90, Frank

Beers' health gave way, and his bright and successful career as a huntsman ended. With all possible kindness Lord Penrhyn had everything done that human skill could accomplish to help his faithful servant. During the summer flattering hopes were entertained of the patient's recovery. At the commencement of the season an attempt was made by the poor man to resume his duties, but one hour's trial proved to Mr. Robarts and those present that all hope had vanished, and the above-named gentleman, being in charge during Lord Penrhyn's absence, sent the hounds home.

Tom Smith then took the horn, and hunted very much to the satisfaction of all, and had a very good season, of which there is no record beyond the fact of a good average of foxes being killed and good sport prevailing.

In the month of January, 1891, I received the following letter from Lord Penrhyn on the subject of his Lordship's resigning the Mastership of the Hounds:—

Penrhyn Castle, Bangor, N.W., Jan. 1st, 1891.

DEAR SIR,—You have done so much to help me in hunting affairs, since I have been Master, that I am sure you will be sorry to hear that I have quite decided on giving up the hounds at the end of this season. My

reason for doing so is that I really cannot find time to attend to my duties as Master of Hounds, without running the risk of neglecting business in this part of the world; and, therefore, as I cannot do the whole thing in a manner which is satisfactory to myself, I have settled to abandon attempting what is an impossibility.

I have no idea what the future of the country will be; but I only hope my successor will be fortunate enough to meet, on all sides, with the same cordial co-operation that you have extended to myself. Wishing you and yours a Happy New Year,

I am, Yours truly,

J. K. Elliott, Esq.,

PENRHYN.

Lillingstone Lovell.

Sufficient proof, if such were needed, may be found in the huntsman's diary to shew that the nine seasons during which Lord Penrhyn was Master were very successful, and could not be surpassed.

A meeting of the Hunt was called, and a vote of thanks was passed to the late Master; and universal regret was expressed at losing his lordship's services.

The Grafton were in luck once more. Mr. Roberts, than whom no man was more popular, joined the Hon. Edward Douglas-Pennant, and carried on the Hunt in the old form.

With this period I arrive at my limit of fifty years,

and close my reminiscences and remarks as to the Grafton Masters and Hounds by stating how pleased I am that the country is now in such good hands as those of the Hon. E. Douglas-Pennant ; and I wish him every success.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FARMERS—FOX PRESERVERS— THE GAMEKEEPERS.

ALTHOUGH I was for many years a farmer myself, and therefore feel some natural diffidence in writing of the farmers, yet all will freely admit that it is only their due to speak of them in the highest terms. No one has seen or known more of them during the last half-century than myself. I first knew them in the days of "Live and let live." I wish that I could repeat that in connection with them now. Circumstances, over which we have no control, have militated against the landed interest, and have operated in favour of others, leaving the farmer in a much worse position than he was; and it seems very sad that it should be so.

Notwithstanding this calamity, there is still great loyalty to Foxhunting remaining in the hearts of the farmers; and where they are treated kindly

by those who are under an obligation to them no untoward results are to be feared.

Masters of Hounds and Gentlemen hunting from their homes in the country are, as a rule, very liberal ; but there are visitors and strangers of whom it may truly be said that they might very easily do more than they do, and I shall hardly be ruled out of order if I remind that class of hunting men that the farmer finds the playground, and there is certainly something due to him for so doing. The apparent overlooking of this fact may be only the result of thoughtlessness but it is not the right thing anyhow.

It is a great pleasure to me to be able, in writing of the Grafton farmers, to say that in the period covered by this history we only had one man who revolted, and he did it openly ; he was utilised and that in a fitting manner, namely, to compare with the good ones and show them up to the best advantage.

Some of the farmers had coverts on their farms, whether the same were their own property or rented. Messrs. Aris, of Weedon, father and son, had Weedon Coppice, than which there was no better place, and the Diary extracts now published will show the value of this covert to the hunt. Mr. Aris, of Oakley Bank, had the

shooting and care of Plumpton Wood for sixty-five years, and had a luncheon on the table every Friday for years. Mr. Samuel Ayers of Potcote, was a wonderful fox preserver. Mr. J. Bartlett of Whitfield had two or three coverts; Mr. Fairbrother a part of Allithorn; Mr. William Whitton, and his son, Mr. Thomas Whitton, had the noted Tite's Coppice; Mr. Joseph Whitton, Grub's Coppice; Mr. Pike of Haversham, the gorse which bears his name; Messrs. Whiting of Castlethorpe also had coverts; Mr. Wait of Lichborough, The Coppice; Mr. Roper had Blisworth Gorse. The following were large occupiers and loyal supporters:—Messrs. Aris (of Adstone), Amos, Barfords, Barretts, Birds, Chapmans, Goffs, Clarkes, Bennetts, Blunts, Dunkleys, Grimsdicks, Hursts, Corbett Whitton, Ward, Messingers, Montgomerys, Mannings, Nickson, Shepherds, Franklins, Scotts, Timms, Starmer, Hurleys, Linnell, York, Ganderton, Johnsons, Checkleys, Ridges, Whitlocks, Peasland, Pinckards, Bull, Harris, Pains, George, Kennings, Newitts, Nichols, Maule, Jeffery, Jessett, Farmer, Wait, Gibbins, Underwoods, Wards, Bazeley, Watts, Stops, Savage, and many others.

A few years ago Mr. James Bartlett, above

mentioned, of Whitfield, which parish was but ill-provided with a church, and was besides very small and poor, being anxious to remedy this state of things, and finding it impossible to raise the necessary funds in the usual way, made a collection in the hunting field, with the result that the bulk of the money was provided by hunting gentlemen, which fact is commemorated by the church, which was duly built, being called "The Hunting Church."

In the year 1871 the farmers and friends of Frank Beers subscribed at the rate of £1 each towards a wedding present for him; the sum collected amounted to £383.

No country could be more highly favoured than the Grafton country was by noblemen and gentlemen in the way of shooting; his Grace the Duke of Grafton only preserved the outlying coverts for foxes and the Forest from trespassers. Sir Robert Loder had great shootings with any number of foxes and was a staunch fox-hunter. Sir Henry Dryden was for many years most kind in preserving foxes, although he did not participate in the sport. Colonel Morgan, of Biddlesden, has always been good, and Mrs. FitzGerald, of Shalstone, cannot be surpassed.

Yardley Chase, and the woods on that side, I

have alluded to in another place. Easton Neston has always been good. Captain Hall, of Foxcote, was never without foxes. Mr. Gough (of Maidsmoreton), Mr. Grant, Mr. Ives, Mr. Grant-Ives, and many others, small proprietors, have always done well.

Mr. Vernon, of Stoke Park; Lady Hanmer, of Weston by Weedon; Lord Ellesmere, Lord Barrington, Mr. Robarts, and Mr. George Campbell; leading members of the Hunt. Sir Herewald Wake and the Gunning family are, and have been also good fox preservers; and so has Mr. Delap of Lillingstone Lovell.

The statement that Fox-hunting and its prospects have greatly changed during my life will occasion no surprise to my readers. The sport is more popular than ever, and it is a question how far the increase of its popularity may adversely affect it; and much depends on the support extending in due proportion with the increase in the number of followers.

“Iron” has indeed, “entered into the soul” of the hunting-grounds! and it seems to me, now, almost incredible that I can remember the time when there was not an iron rail in the Countries I have spoken of. How gradually and how steadily railways have increased, and are still

increasing and scarifying the country! From the time when the great George Stephenson was lodging in one of the Duke of Grafton's farm-houses at Blisworth, and giving directions and preparing specifications for the London and North Western line, through the Grafton Hunt, up to the present period, there has been no cessation in the promotion and formation of that which may be termed "The Necessity of the Age."

After all, there is no apparent reason why hunting may not be carried on, even under existing difficulties of the kind mentioned above, although the sport is interfered with to a certain extent.

Against the new hindrances to the exercise of "The Sport of Kings" must be set the vast improvements which have taken place in the Woodlands. Whittlebury Forest has been curtailed in a marked degree; the large head of deer it formerly contained was disposed of at the time of the enclosure, only a small herd remaining, and these were confined on seven hundred acres, in Whittlebury Park, the greater proportion of which were reclaimed from the jungle, and this clearance gives hounds an opportunity of chasing their fox without hindrance.

There are thousands of acres cleared which grew the thickest underwood when I first hunted in the Forest, and now yield an opening for hounds to act freely and shew excellent sport.

Salcey Forest in days gone by was a thicket from one end to the other; there were deep ditches to baffle hounds in every quarter. On account of the great growth of young oak timber the underwood has been destroyed, which enables hounds to work and press the foxes.

Surly old Bucknells, which rarely holds a scent, has been greatly modernised in my time. I have a lively recollection of following George Carter through the only driftway there was in it. It has now eight ridings pointing to the centre and extending to the outside fence, with many cross-ridings; but it is a curious fact that the foxes will not avail themselves of the open running they might have in them, but persist in running the Covert, which is a very bad scenting one. Of the many huntsmen I have seen in those woods, I never knew one to speak well of them. To give the place its due, many good runs have been seen in it, and on a few occasions from it. I have seen a fox run from it to Fawsley. Lord Southampton used to pay visits to shoot with other noblemen; we always used to know when his

lordship was going out by the Woodland Meets during his absence, for the purpose of driving the foxes into the open.

Although Yardley Chase was a long way from me I always had a great affection for it; hounds could always act there, and nowhere was better hunting to be seen than in the woods and in the surrounding country.

A subject now comes up upon which I dare hardly trust myself to write, as it has no redeeming feature in the eyes of a fox-hunter, and one cannot but regret that it has attractions for the farmer; the thing meant is "Barbed Wire." It may well be said of it that "the snake has risen out of the grass and secreted itself in the hedge!" and that so effectually that it is not visible to the naked eye, and until its horrid fangs are stuck into a poor horse there is no warning of its presence. It must be hoped that good offices and good-nature may avail to overcome the difficulty and lessen the danger.

The Grafton country is perhaps second to none for making a pack of hounds perfect in their work, if they be kept what one may call "indoors" during cub-hunting. No man knew better what a pack of hounds should do, and how they ought to do it, than the late Lord Southampton. He was

most severe in drafting from the head of his pack. He gave away a dog called Priam, which I thought was the best I had seen up to that time; on my expressing regret, his lordship gave his reason: "In the first place," he said, "Bob Ward and that dog would lose any fox! I admit his superiority, he wants to do all the work! And, pray, what is the pack to do? If you have a hound of that kind he disgusts the others and they lose their interest."

A jealous hound his lordship would not keep. If he saw a hard runner, when he came to a check, follow an old hound and watch him pick the scent up, then slip in and take it away from him, he would have to go; to take that for which he had not worked was dishonest.

In conversation with Tom Firr—than whom there was no better authority—I remarked, "Jealousy is a great curse in a foxhound." "I quite agree with you," he replied. "In wanting to get on they lead the pack, when they miss the turn of the fox and bore on drawing the others after them." He added by way of illustration, "I had a hound of that kind, and I once saw him go ahead for two fields, the others stopped; he then stopped and looked back; seeing they did not follow he went back as

fast as he could, picked up the line, and followed thence, knowing where he had left it!"

The Friday country is the best from a riding point of view; it is as good a scenting district as can be, with plenty of jumping for a man who goes with the hounds; and firm grass, in good proportion, to gallop over. Moreton Pinkney and Sulgrave require a good man and a hunter to surmount the impediments, and there have always been men who could hold their own over the severest part of it. Mr. G. Campbell and the Honourable R. Grosvenor went very straight, as did also Mr. T. Whitton and Mr. Blencowe, our two best welter-weights, who were only equalled by Mr. Muntz. All the light-weight farmers could go well, and many of them have shone between the flags.

The Hunt servants, who were chosen by the Masters solely because they were good horsemen, have always been mounted on cattle which could compete with the pack.

In or from the Monday country the Warden Hill district is occasionally reached. A very good run there, with most severe fencing, may be recalled. After leaving Charwelton hounds ran over Byfield, bearing to the right into Hellidon Field, the village on the right, Priors

Marston on the right, at a great pace. Very near the village I had an easy fall. Mr. Harry Everard looked over the hedge; I said, "It will do!" "No, thank you," he answered decidedly; "Beers is down and you have been down, I will have none of it!"

Beers' horse, Hunting Horn, with the saddle flaps flying, was going down the field like Pegasus, verifying his nomenclature at every stride by carrying the horn without the Huntsman!

Hounds ran on over the Catesby doubles, along the vale, over the brook and nearly to Staverton Wood, when a flock of sheep brought them to a check; Beers came up on the whipper-in's horse, and thought we had changed foxes, and there ended a very severe run. Mr. Vincent Shepherd rode well on a chesnut horse which his father bred and sold to the Duke of Grafton after that performance. Lord Camperdown and Mr. Edward Knott used to go well on that side.

At the time this narrative commences and for twenty years afterwards there was only one fox in three compared with the present time; a mangy fox was then seldom seen or heard of.

A fox-hunting farmer said to me last autumn, "I am completely eaten up with foxes."

“Do you keep greyhounds?” I asked.

“No, I do not,” was the reply.

“When you lived in the Grafton country you used to do so,” I rejoined, “and many others also, and I always credited the greyhounds with killing one fox to five killed by the pack; and I do not think I exaggerated.”

“Well,” he said, reflecting, “now that you name it I think there is a good deal in what you say, for I once had a dog which did catch them, and when he caught one he carried him about and would not let me have him.”

Formerly there were greyhounds, or lurchers, kept in every village in the Grafton Hunt, and the stubble was put into heaps in the field and formed a favourite bed for Reynard. At the present time I only know of one brace of greyhounds in the Hunt, and they are in my native village; and, happening to be there on a visit at Christmas, the hounds sent a fox down to the outskirts of the village, and one of the greyhounds killed him a very short distance from me.

In Lord Southampton's time foxes were found to be very thin in the spring, and blank days threatened. Meeting on one occasion at Whistley—the Hunt's largest covert on the south side—we drew it blank; Halse Coppice,

Allithorn, Hutchinson's Covert, Plumpton, Seawell, and Grimscote Heath were also blank. Seeing Mr. William Wait of Lichborough, in the distance, I rode up and asked him if there were a fox about. "Yes," he said, "You will find in Lichborough Coppice." Lord Southampton was informed of it, and also that it was a lamb-killer. He was viewed away at 5.5 and killed at 5.55 o'clock, after a ring up to Stowe, when hounds were so near him that he turned right-handed up to Cold Higham, and they caught him in the hedge before he could get into Grub's Coppice. A very good finish after the long draw. This was the last day in the open country in 1848.

THE GAMEKEEPERS.

One cannot over-estimate the value of a keeper who is loyal to fox-hunting and interests himself in the preservation of foxes. No history of the Grafton Hunt would be complete which should omit to mention men of this class who have done good service in the cause.

Rayson, the park keeper at Fawsley, is a well-known figure trotting about the estate on hunting days. After many years' service he has attained a great age, and it is pleasant to hear that he still exerts himself, and applies his knowledge in

the office he has so long and so honourably filled, having served under four successive baronets.

Paragreen of Blisworth, is another; he served for many years under the late Colonel FitzRoy and his son (the General), who had the shooting over a large portion of the Duke of Grafton's property including Plane Woods. A more energetic or zealous man could not be, nor one who prided himself more in showing plenty of foxes. He was also of great service when depredations occurred in going to ascertain the extent of the damage, and in rendering a correct account to the manager of the Poultry Fund.

Whistley Wood has long been under the care of John Pollard. The Huntsman knew where to find him in that large covert, and never failed to reach him as soon as he could knowing how reliable he was. Lord Ellesmere was and is his Master and appreciates the success of the hunt in that favourite covert. Another good man under the noble lord is Bonham who looks after Hatch Woods and Halse Coppice.

The late Spencer Longland was employed by the Duke of Grafton for many years in the Green's Norton country, and, at his death, was succeeded in the Duke's service at Wakefield by his son.

Atkins, the present keeper at Green's Norton, being then appointed. The whole of the property swarms with foxes. Besides those above-mentioned many good men have passed away leaving good characters behind them.



SIR CHARLES KNIGHTLEY, Bart.

CHAPTER XIV.

SIR CHARLES KNIGHTLEY.—SIR
RAINALD KNIGHTLEY.—THE REV.
VALENTINE KNIGHTLEY.—MR.
SELBY-LOWNDES, M.F.H.—BOB
WARD, HUNTSMAN.

IT was in my early manhood that I first knew Sir Charles Knightley, and as the acquaintance grew I came to regard him in the same light as Sydney Smith did Macaulay, namely as "A book in breeches!" Every word Sir Charles uttered had a ring of knowledge that was delightful.

When I first beheld the house at Fawsley nestling in its picturesque surroundings, I was greatly impressed with the beauties of the scene, and keenly realised that Nature had lavished loveliness upon it with no niggard hand. With its broad pastures stretching afar, its stately timber standing out in bold relief on Nature's elevations,

showing it off to great advantage; its rich deer park mantled by a grove of majestic beeches; and a lake to complete the beauty of the panorama, it stands conspicuous as one of "The Stately Homes of England."

It was an added satisfaction to know that the character of the owner was in harmony with the grandeur of the place: and Sir Charles Knightley was a prince among fox-hunters.

The plentiful supply of venison enabled Sir Charles to exercise his generosity to his friends, tenants, and neighbours to the full. Men of all creeds could eat of his venison with avidity and a relish. But he was at variance with the cooks, and, considering that they did not do justice to the haunches he sent to his friends, he determined to ask the recipients, in many instances, within a radius of a dozen miles of Fawsley, to cook it there. To carry out this scheme he had an oven placed upon wheels and sent the venison to his friends, properly cooked, at any hour they chose to name.

Many anecdotes were told of Sir Charles Knightley. Here is one: A fat deer managed to escape from the park in the height of the season for killing, and it strayed to a field in Byfield Parish near to Griffin's Gorse, and was killed by

Mr. Barnes's men. It was properly dressed by a butcher and a venison feast was proposed to celebrate the harvest home.

On the following day Sir Charles's keeper appeared on horseback with a venison basket on each side of the saddle, and demanded the buck. Mr. Barnes gave it up at once but asked the keeper to wait while he wrote a note. On the keeper's return he met his master and handed him the note which ran as follows :—

Mr. Barnes's compliments to Sir Charles Knightley, and he begs to say that he had intended to put the deer to a proper purpose by giving a feast to the poor.

Sir Charles sent the keeper back to Byfield with his compliments to Mr. Barnes, and begged his acceptance of the venison for the purpose he had named. My informant told me that he lived with Mr. Barnes at the time and that the poor were treated with the present.

Two other anecdotes of the worthy gentleman of whom I am now writing may here be given :—

Byfield is noted for Freeholders. Sir Charles regularly attended the meetings of Guardians. On one occasion an applicant for relief came from that parish. "Byfield again!" Sir Charles

exclaimed; "they are freeholders but not free givers!"

In the days when dogs were used for drawing small carts a fishmonger from Daventry named Bree used to take fish into the country for sale. One day he was passing the "Lantern House" (a lodge gate) when the man who kept it stopped him and asked if he had a turbot; Bree said he had, a good one. The lodge-keeper told him that the cook at Fawsley wanted one. Bree replied, "Open the gate, and I will go down."

"Unless you promise to give me half the price of the fish I won't let you through," said the grasping lodge-keeper.

After considerable argument Bree agreed, and was then admitted to the Park and went and sold his fish to the cook. While he was at the door Sir Charles appeared upon the scene and, enquiring the price, said he would settle for the fish. Bree said, "Forty stripes on my back, with a whip!" pulling off his coat to receive them. And no other payment would he take. Sir Charles fetched the coachman, and, saying he had a fool to deal with, told the man not to hit him hard.

Bree counted the stripes up to twenty, and then exclaimed:—

"Stop now, there is a partner in this business;

the lodge-keeper is to have half the price of the fish for letting me through!"

After that transaction Sir Charles greatly assisted the fishmonger. I never heard how the gate-keeper fared.

Sir Charles Knightley was a great authority on agricultural matters and very successful as a breeder of Shorthorns, besides being a good practical grazier. His foresight regarding agricultural depression was only too correct. He made no secret of his predictions. "Sooner or later it must come!" he used to say to his tenants. This had such a powerful effect upon one of them, Mr. Jonas Paine, a large grazier, who was wont to appear in the hunting field well dressed and well mounted, that he altered his costume and came out in trousers. I overheard a friend ask him why he had made this change; his reply was, "Bob Peel has got my breeches and boots!"

Sir Charles used to enjoy a chat about old days in the Quorn country, and with Charles King and the Pytchley. I once asked him if he had marked any time in particular when there had been a better scent with a fox than usual. He replied, "I have; when I was at Melton in the month of March after the ground had been very

wet, a white frost followed every morning, and we went out and returned home about two o'clock in the afternoon, having accounted for a brace of foxes, and given our horses plenty to do, and this sport continued through the month."

Sir Charles was his own steward, attending to the wants of his tenants whom he was very fond of meeting upon their land early in the morning. The estate being chiefly grass he paid the greatest attention to the drinking-places. Kindness to the poor has long been a great characteristic of the Knightleys. Sir Charles had a fixed morning for the aged poor to receive alms, as he had a dread of their going to the workhouse. Sir Charles Knightley lived in the "Good old times" and was my "Grand old Man."

I will conclude this short memoir with one more story. In the old house at Fawsley there was a room which was reputed to be haunted, it is now pulled down. A good many years ago a large party had been invited there to meet the Bishop. None of the lady guests would sleep in the haunted room; it was therefore arranged that the Bishop, who was not aware of the ghost, should occupy it. All the rest of the party knew of the ghost, and the arrival of his lordship at the breakfast table was awaited with considerable

interest, but some disappointment was felt when the Bishop appeared, quite unconcerned and at his ease, and partook of a hearty meal.

However it was concluded that his lordship had been tired the night before and had fallen asleep before the ghost had appeared, or, perhaps, was aware of his lordship's presence. They therefore decided to await the events of one more night before questioning the Bishop. The result was disappointing, for the Bishop came down next morning in perfect health, and with his appetite unimpaired. One lady could not restrain her curiosity, and asked his lordship if he knew that he had been sleeping in a haunted room.

He replied he had discovered that on the first night, and related how his room had been suddenly illuminated by an unearthly light, and a beautiful lady, splendidly dressed, had appeared ; his lordship went on :—

“Addressing her I said, ‘you are evidently a wealthy lady, don’t go away!’ I went to my pocket and pulled out a subscription list for a new church which I want to build, and turning towards the beautiful apparition I continued, ‘I know you will give me £100 towards it,’—but the words were scarcely spoken when she vanished away, and I saw no more of her!”

The Bishop then, addressing the inquisitive lady, said, "You are a rich lady too, I know you will help me.!" but she replied that she must really run away and pack, as she was leaving almost immediately; and to similar appeals from his lordship the other guests returned like excuses, whereupon the Bishop exclaimed, "Oh dear! what shall I do? the dead fly from me, the living leave me—how shall I get my church built!!!"

SIR RAINALD KNIGHTLEY.

This gentleman succeeded to the estate on the death of Sir Charles. He represented the Southern Division of Northamptonshire in Parliament for many years, until he was created a life Peer. In his young days he was a fine rider to hounds and knew the secret when to ride as well as how to ride.

He possessed a horse of great merit, which he called "Go-easy"; no man had a better or a better-looking horse. On him Sir Rainald was at home, and sailed over the country in the front rank in graceful style.

He had the misfortune to meet with a bad fracture, after which he took things more quietly; but he was a fine sportsman and welcomed the Grafton and Pytchley hounds on all occasions.

Lady Knightley was very fond of hunting and graced the Field with her presence at the near meets, while by her affability and kind manner she gained the esteem of all.

Lord Knightley's mantle fell upon Sir Charles Knightley, the present baronet, who is so well known and liked in the neighbourhood ; and with Lady Knightley fond of hunting also there will be a home for the fox and a welcome to the hunter as of old.

THE REV. VALENTINE KNIGHTLEY.

A good man, who has recently departed this life, after devoting his time and talents to the benefit of others. He had for many years the charge of the foxes and game on the Fawsley estate. The shooting was wild and not being preserved very strictly it was a secondary consideration. Mr. Knightley, always popular, had a happy way of keeping the farmers good friends to the chase. If the owner of Fawsley were asked where the hounds should draw no decision was given until he had been consulted. He was a great friend to the foxes and would beg them off if he could. Full of honourable feeling, if any damage had been done to cattle or colts, he took care that the farmer was remunerated.

As well as conducting his clerical duties in an able manner he took the lead in his parishioners' games, pleasures, and holidays. No child who ever knew that good man will forget the kindness received at his hands. No man could be more respected in his generation than he was. The poor—and the foxes—have lost their best friend.

This good pastor was sixty years at Preston Capes. Late in life he succeeded to the Fawsley estate; but, in his great unselfishness and generosity, he at once made it over to the present baronet.

MR. SELBY-LOWNDES.

The late Mr. William Selby - Lowndes commenced to hunt the upper part of the Grafton country in the autumn of 1842. He was a great admirer of George Carter, and took Dickens, the second whipper-in, as his kennelman and whipper-in. Mr. Lowndes always fed his hounds on Indian meal. He also had a notion, which does not go down with many people, that a hound need not be so very straight, and always maintained that those which were not so were the best wearers. At any rate he soon got together a killing pack of hounds, and could catch his foxes with them. I remember his bringing his



WILLIAM SELBY-LOWNDES, ESQ., SENIOR.

pack down by invitation to Whittlebury Forest and killing a brace of foxes handsomely.

About the year 1853 Mr. Lowndes gave the country back again to Lord Southampton for a time, during which he hunted the North Warwickshire and the Atherstone. However, he returned and took back the country from Lord Southampton after five seasons, and it has remained in the possession of father and son ever since. In 1862 Mr. Lowndes bought Lord Southampton's hounds, of which he retained the bitches, selling his own pack and the Whittlebury dog hounds at Tattersall's.

On the 28th of October in that year I went to see the old pack. When I drew near College Wood, where they began, I met the pack coming over the cross-roads into the Grove, which was then standing. The people, one and all, pulled up at the cross-roads. As I knew by the tone of the cry that they meant to treat the fox severely, I followed the hounds. When I arrived at the bottom of the wood they were gone. I halloo'd lustily but no one appeared, and down to Little Horwood the 'ladies' were before me. The fox ran the Gardens, which hindered them, and enabled me to meet them in a dirty lane. The thought struck me that they would not get on

very fast, so I called them, and every hound seemed to know me, and down the back street we went and into the direct road for Mursley. On clearing the village hounds caught the scent, and ran directly over Mr. Dauncey's Park, and down to a very awkward fence and brook at the bottom; then a very rough country had to be crossed on the left of Winslow Spinneys, over the Swanbourne road, where more difficulties came for me, but the hounds kept singing away. The fox ran up a grass baulk with two or three gates upon it; many hounds jumped them. We then crossed the Aylesbury road leaving Christmas Gorse and Mains Hill on the right. At this point a broad expanse of the creamy Vale presented itself; not for one instant had they checked. Going as of old, they gave me work enough to keep with them; and ran straight over the Vale up to North Marston. There the fox turned right-handed; he had shot his bolt, but still they chased him down to the right of Granborough, and I saw him; the bitches crept up to him and from scent to view they ran into a fine old fox in the middle of a large grass field.

At that moment I saw a gentleman coming into the field at the bottom and he was the first man to appear. All through inattention on the part of

the Field, as good a run as hounds could have, over so fine a line, was lost. The Squire reached Mains Hill whence he could see the hounds in the distance ; he came up delighted.

Having such an affection for the old pack I hunted every Tuesday I was able to in the following season. The sport being exceptionally good the meets were well attended. On bad scenting days, which happily were few and far between, some of the wild gentlemen pressed on the hounds.

The Vale of Aylesbury, as a rule, is very good scenting ground; some of the grass is very deep in the winter and does not carry stock, which is a great help to the pack but is very severe for the horses ; only men well mounted, and possessed of good judgment, can live with the hounds on the low ground.

At that time Lord Petre was fond of running down for one day a week, and enjoyed the change from the Essex ploughs, where he hunted the stag. Lord Charles Russell also used to enjoy a ride over the Vale. When hounds were running his lordship had a most peculiar habit. Nature had provided him with a very large tongue but with insufficient room for it in his mouth, which caused him to ride with it hanging out, and it was

always a wonder that he did not bite it off! He was a very hard rider, and an excellent all-round sportsman.

Mr. John Leech, of *Punch* renown, came out with the Whaddon Chase Hounds, and there found subjects suitable for his sporting cartoons.

No man was more popular than the Honourable Robert Grimston. Being rather a welter weight he used to ride strong blood horses and well understood how to make use of them. With honourable notions of the highest order he was often consulted as referee when difficulties arose between two people. He was a distinguished-looking man, of a peculiar type, and wore a hat with a very broad brim on the back of his head, with a black band under his chin. This gave him a rather clerical aspect; and he was very fond of telling a story of two boys in a crowd who were attracted by his appearance. One boy was calling him names, when the other rebuked him, saying "Hold your noise, he will hear you; it's the Dean of Westminster!" Mr. Grimston was a fine sportsman, and was highly esteemed by his numerous friends and acquaintances.

Another good man at that time was Mr. Cazenove, who was also fond of the vale hunting, whether after fox or stag.

Mr. Lowndes had a hard-riding tenant named Charles Higgins, who possessed a good deal of knowledge of a kind very distasteful to a fox, and could undertake the duties of a whipper-in in assisting the Squire to catch one. He had a fine voice, of which, however, he lost control at times. I happened to be with the Squire in Shenley Wood when a fox was just afoot; Charles galloped past us, screaming vehemently; the Squire, turning to me, said "He is very tonguey, but I shan't draft him."

Although Mr. Lowndes did not ride hard he was generally on the line, having an accurate knowledge of the country; and when he did come up, he, like George Carter, knew what to do.

Two good men, who were also good riders, Colonel Hunt and Mr. John Foy, joined the hunt. The Colonel rode well to hounds without any fuss or hesitation. If anyone challenged him, he was not slow to accept the invitation. There was a gentleman then living in the hunt who rode fearfully hard at first, and he tried the Colonel very much. One day this man started in his old form; at him the soldier went, and as he passed me I said, "Let him go, Colonel, he won't last five minutes." At the first fence over he went, and down he fell, the horse was up first.

A little on the left the Colonel's horse jumped into a newly-cut drain, and rolled over; the horses then had it to themselves and the riders had to run.

The Colonel hunted for some years with the Whaddon Chase Hounds and was an ornament to the hunt. After poor Jem Mason died he piloted Lady William Osborn, and very well he performed that office. Mr. Foy was a good sportsman and would ride steadily and to the end of most of the gallops. As I kept no diary I am unable to say more than that there was first-rate sport.

In a very good run over the Creslow country I felt sorry for Jem Mason. We were going along together so cheerfully and had negotiated a good water jump, when I looked back and saw Lady William Osborn drop into the brook; of course Jem had to go back and lost the run.

On another occasion we had a good run and reached the river at Thornton.

"What's to be done now, Jem?" I asked.

"I am not going to do anything," was the reply.

I said, "I will try for once in my life!" and in I went; my horse took two steps and then dived quite out of sight, came up, and swam across;

Jem laughing at me. Of course hounds ran two fields and then checked until the people came round, so that I had my trouble for my pains. As I was wet to my pockets I rode home, changed into dry clothes, and struck swimming out of my hunting programme. The Vale of Aylesbury is certainly a rare scenting country, and second to none.

It was matter for great regret that Mr. Lowndes did not breed hounds enough to keep up that perfect pack of bitches, and at the present time it would probably puzzle anyone to trace back to them. For many years the Fitzwilliam draft was taken, and very good they were in those days.

Time has slipped away and the old Squire is no more; he is succeeded by a good son, an expert horseman and a good sportsman; the farmers are with him and for him, and may he live long to enjoy the hunting and his neighbours' friendship! When hunting in the Vale, you are bound to meet a thrusting Field. It is only natural that good horsemen should resort to such a playground in order to indulge in the game of which they are so fond.

Mr. W. Levi, Messrs. Saunders, Wilson, Gerald Pratt, and many others whom I fear I did not know, were very good riders. Mr. Greaves

of Winslow has been most interested in the pack, and a great supporter of it.

Bentley was huntsman for many years, and needs no praise of mine. He was brought up in a good school. From his hound knowledge throughout the whole science he was undoubtedly a most creditable pupil. It is a pleasing fact that although he has retired, he resides in the midst of his former followers and those who have the greatest friendship for him.

Many ladies attend the Whaddon Chase fixtures; Mrs. Leopold Rothschild and Mrs. Lambton are famous riders. I once saw Miss Wilson ride over a piece of timber as high and strong as anything I ever saw a lady attempt; and she did it as if it were a common occurrence. At the present time if a stranger is wanting a pilot he might do worse than keep Mr. Gerald Pratt in sight.

Another excellent rider was Mr. Chinnery, also Mr. Stewart Freeman, men any country may be proud of possessing. Later on Lord and Lady Orkney and the Honourable — Bouverie were very good. No man hunted longer, or rode better, than "Billy" Levi for years. Lord Battersea and Mr. Peter Flower were good performers. In later days the illustrious Whyte Melville used to hunt

regularly in the Vale. All know and lament his sad end.

BOB WARD.

Bob Ward was a leviathan huntsman ; a man of tall stature, broad in the chest, and on a large scale altogether. His size and weight, however, did not prevent his shewing great activity. He was quiet, civil, and most respectful in manner, and a general favourite with those with whom he came in contact. In listening to his conversation one would never have suspected Bob of having regularly attended school, as in his pronunciation he was at variance with orthodox prosody ; and in using such words as baker, gate, or lane he would put in as many "a's" as he could.

Bob began in the "bäaking" business at Brixworth. In that village there then resided one Squire Wood, who kept harriers, which attracted Bob's attention ; and by some means he "got in with" the Squire and was trusted to hunt these hounds and prepare them for the season. Bob had a "chap"—a term by which he always afterwards addressed his whippers-in—to turn the pack to him.

The following account I should not dare to write had I not heard it from Bob's own lips. I

have had the honour of being invited by Mr. Leopold de Rothschild (through Fred Cox) to the puppy show at Ascott. On those occasions the party consisted of about half a score of huntsmen, past and present—Bob Ward always being one. The last time poor Bob was there he was in bad health, and he had his daughter with him to take care of him.

There is no lack of fun with such a party. One of them called upon Bob for a tale before going into the kennel.

“Well,” Bob began, “you know I hunted harriers. I was out with them one morning; we had a good scent, and gave them some good work, you know. After we had been running for some time, they got into a road; they kept chattering to it you know. I couldn’t quite understand it and I said to my chap, ‘I don’t think this is right, they get so near the village;’ and I said to my chap, ‘I know they are running the old post-woman,’ and into the village they went, and they ran up to a door where the old woman was, and jumped up at her back, and got into the house and made such a rattle, breaking the crockery fearfully. I got into no end of trouble about it; the old woman had a basket of herrings!”

After great applause one of the company said, "Let us have one more tale, Bob, before we go into the kennel."

"Well," Bob said, "after that row with the old woman there was a deal of talk about it. There was a gentleman farmer in the pläace who had ä saacy bull. He said to me, 'Bob, I wish you would let your dogs run my bull.' I said, 'If they do they will kill him.' 'I don't mind that,' he said, 'you run him.' So one morning we were out, and had had some work with the hares, and I said to my chap, 'We will go now and run the bull.' So we went into the field and my chap fetched the bull from among the cows, and I started him galloping and halloo'd them on, there was such a 'charm' with them and I rode after them and cheered. Over the hedge he went, through it went they and across the next grass field, full cry. He jumped the next hedge, pitched on his head in the next field, and when I got round to him I found he had broken his neck and was dead! I said to my chap, 'We must go and tell the gentleman,' so we trotted up to the house. I said, 'Sir, we have run the bull and killed him.' 'I am very glad, Bob,' he replied, 'I will send the cart for him; where is he?' I told him and he said 'I am glad

you have done him.' Now, none of you huntsmen ever killed a bull!' and we adjourned to the kennel."

Bob was with Mr. Charles Barnet in Cambridgeshire before going to Lord Southampton to whip-in. Lord Southampton liked Bob very much; he was very good at pulling down rails or lifting a gate off the hooks for my lord.

One day his lordship cautioned Bob about the horse he had kicking hounds; "I knew that years ago, my lord," was Bob's comment. "He is a good horse," his lordship said. "I never heard that of him, my lord," Bob replied.

On going to Mr. Leigh to hunt the Hertfordshire, new kennels were built; Bob was the architect, and everyone who has seen them must allow that they are a credit to the designer. He found a pack there which he did not consider to be suitable for the style of country, and set about forming one to his own fancy. I did not visit the kennel for six or seven years after Bob went there, and then I was never more pleased with a pack of the kind. He had bred the hounds much less in size than those he found there; and he had taken as his model a good hound of Lord Southampton's, called Prophetess, of small size with great power, and he had

succeeded in obtaining a very smart pack. Bob's reason for breeding small hounds was that the flints cut the large feet of heavy hounds so much.

Mr. Arkwright thought very highly of Bob, and one could seldom mention him without Mr. Arkwright saying "Ward is a very clever man."

I happened to meet Bob on the railway one season, just after a great run he had had, and he related it to me with great delight. Hunting with the Oakley directly afterwards, I asked Mr. Arkwright if he had heard of the run with the Hertfordshire. "I have not heard the particulars," he said. So I related them.

It appears that the fox was found in the centre of Bob's country, and set his head straight for the Oakley country, and crossed the line from Bletchley to Bedford, near Liddington, pointing straight for Marston Thrift. Bob knew his fox was beaten and dreaded a change in the Thrift. When approaching the covert he told his whipper-in to turn the pack to him and not to make a noise. When he got the hounds he took them alongside the covert up to a gate, and was going through the gate when it struck him that the fox had not had time; so he took the hounds and stood back out of sight; and in about two minutes the fox

came away. He did not let them see him ; but when he was out of sight put them on the line, and after racing him for a mile they ran into him.

"There !" Mr. Arkwright said, "I always told you Bob was a clever man ; very few huntsmen would have made those calculations which killed the fox."

On account of Bob's weight Mr. Leigh paid high prices for his horses, as the writer can testify. I was asked by Mr. Leigh to write to him if I happened to have a weight carrier. My then landlord had a good horse to sell, and asked me to find a customer for him. I wrote to Mr. Leigh full particulars of the horse's qualities. Bob was sent to see him ; he had a ride, and liked the horse very much ; he said that it would not suit his master, but would carry him. I said, "I am afraid your master would not give £400 for a horse to carry you."

"He would, if I tell him," Bob answered.

"Do you mean to tell him ?" I asked.

"I do," was the reply.

In due course I received a cheque for £400 which I endorsed and sent to my landlord. The horse was bred by Mr. Shadrach Tompkins of Leckhampstead, out of a cart mare ; and he carried Ward for eight seasons.

It was quite remarkable how a man of Ward's weight could get over a country as he did. He liked short-legged horses best when he was with Lord Southampton. Nothing Lord Southampton said to Bob offended him. One day his lordship said, "Yes, you hunted for Mr. Barnet ; I heard he only killed one fox all the season, and it so happened that you were not out !"

CHAPTER XV.

THE BELVOIR—MR. ARKWRIGHT AND
THE OAKLEY — THE PYTCHLEY
AND CHARLES PAYN — CAPTAIN
ANSTRUTHER THOMSON.

I HAD been wishing for many years to see the Belvoir pack, and I had had many invitations from Gillard. At last this worthy huntsman captured me at a show at Newark, and took me home with him in the evening.

As he was to exercise the hounds in the morning I asked to be allowed to rise early, and accompany the pack. We took the dog-hounds a round on the eastern side of the Castle for an hour. We then returned home and went on the southern side with the 'ladies.' A ride on a lovely morning, with the views surrounding Belvoir, is a great treat at any time; but to be accompanied by such a talented man in the

‘noble science,’ and such a pack of hounds, added all that I cared for to the pleasure.

After breakfast Gillard gave me a most instructive and agreeable morning on the flags. Hunting all my life with hounds descended from these kennels I could refer back to many of the old hounds which were there before Gillard’s time. You see in the Belvoir Kennel a feature not to be noticed in any kennel I have visited, namely, uniformity of character, quality, colour, and symmetry which is not to be equalled. A list of $62\frac{1}{2}$ couples of hounds shewed five couples only immediately related to another pack.

I made the remark to Gillard that I thought he must be much puzzled to know where to go for a change of blood, without losing the class of his own. To shew that there was something in this a novice like myself was able to pick out three bitches, before we had gone a quarter of a mile, which were of a different character and colour from the rest of the pack. Gillard remarked: “Those are all the strange blood I have besides one dog in the entry.” Anyone referring to the list of 1887 will find that this was so.

I returned home in the evening greatly pleased, and was then able to compare notes with Frank Beers, who always thought so highly of the

Belvoir on account of his good Destitute having been bred there, and being descended, on the dam's side, from Mr. Drake's Duster.

In the following season I met Mr. Ernest Chaplin, who invited me to accept a mount and have a day with the Belvoir. Of course I was only too pleased to avail myself of such a kind offer. During the season I received a very courteous letter inviting me to Grantham, offering me quarters and mounts for two days' hunting. Accordingly I went to "The Angel," and met there some gentlemen of my acquaintance and had an enjoyable time.

In the morning I was riding to the Meet, and at Lord Brownlow's lodge gates I fell in with Gillard, who was letting his pack out of the van. He had the big pack out, all dogs, and a fine lot they were! and I was fortunate in having a ride to covert, a few miles distant, in his company. The fixture was "Byard's Leap," near to a wayside house. I was taken to see the Leap, marked out by four stumps with a horseshoe on each. There was a legend about it to which I did not pay much attention beyond thinking that our forefathers enjoyed greater license for "throwing the hatchet" than is permitted to their descendants.

Two rare good hunters awaited my arrival, and I was asked to ride a black horse first. We moved on to the covert; I saw Gillard making some alteration in his whip-lash which I could not understand, and, asking what it meant, was told: "We are in the stone-wall country and my horse wants rousing at them; you are all right, there is no better wall jumper than that horse." Good hearing, I thought, as I did not often have an opportunity of practising over walls. We soon found a fox—and the walls. My information from the huntsman was correct; the black horse jumped them beautifully, and many of them there were to be jumped. The dog-hounds romped along. It was just the country for a big pack, the 'cry' was delightful, and so was the whole thing.

After a good deal of knocking about, changing foxes now and then, we managed to give two horses a drilling, but did not succeed in catching a fox. The work of one hound in particular was excellent; he was the sort of dog that pleases me; very industrious and determined, and did not bore on, but he would insist upon stopping when he thought he ought to do so, and I saw him turn with the line and put the others right several times; which pleased me so much that I asked

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Gillard what his name was. "Gambler, sir; you know him," he answered.

"No, I do not," I said, positively.

"Yes, you saw him, you know, in the summer," Gillard said.

"That is what I did not do," I replied; "you showed me Gameboy, but you said Gambler had been fighting, and was not fit to be seen."

As I believe there is more progeny from that dog in different packs than from any other, it seemed very satisfactory.

The fixture on the next day was close to Melton, and the small pack was out; a smart lot they were! We found at a gorse near to Melton; ran for twelve minutes, treading on the fox's heels all the way, and killed him. We then went to Melton Gorse, found, and ran about, with a moderate scent; but undulating ground, quarry pits, and arable land did not afford satisfactory results. A hard, long day.

The impression which I formed of the country was, that after turning from Melton it is a hard-working place for hounds and huntsman; while many foxes are not to be caught without earning them. As before remarked, I was delighted with the pack in the kennels, and liked their work



CAPTAIN ARKWRIGHT.

very much ; but no marked superiority over some other packs I have hunted with was specially to be noticed.

With many thanks to my kind friend for the four good hunters he had placed at my disposal, and the great pleasure afforded me of seeing Gillard and the pack in the field, I returned home greatly pleased with my outing.

MR. ARKWRIGHT AND THE OAKLEY.

In 1848 a change took place in the Oakley country. George Beers left to go to Lord Southampton, and Major Hogg, having just returned from foreign service, took the hounds. I believe Mr. Arkwright had been a brother officer of his. The Government requested the Major to go again to India, where he had served with much distinction ; but he only accepted the commission with reluctance, after trying in vain to persuade Mr. Arkwright, or Major Magennis (who had lost an arm), to go in his place ; and it was understood that he was to have the hounds again upon his return.

The business in India was well-nigh accomplished when it was deemed necessary to send an expedition up country again to make terms with some native chiefs. Major Hogg went on

this mission, and, while so engaged, he fell ill of fever and died.

In 1851 George Beers returned to the Oakley Hounds as huntsman. Mr. Arkwright was passionately fond of hunting, devoting the closest attention to it in field and kennel; and embraced the opportunity which now offered of learning from so clever a man as his huntsman.

When Beers left there was a good pack of hounds; but during his absence the breeding as well as other matters had been mismanaged; and all had gone wrong. After his return nothing was omitted that could be done to put matters right again; and at the end of three years' apprenticeship to Beers Mr. Arkwright took the horn.

Having been a visitor in that country for several years, and getting to know and like the Master, my visits continued; indeed, they became more frequent; and I there enjoyed so much sport that the title of this book binds me to give some account of it. I will not describe the country further than by saying that the Yardley Chase end of it was neutral with the Grafton, and was a very favourite place of mine in which to see good fox-hunting. There was, perhaps, no better country in which to test the qualities of a pack;

and a pack or huntsman could hardly be pronounced perfect unless they could catch a brace of foxes there in a day, with anything like a scent.

This property belongs to the Marquis of Northampton, and its resources for hunting are, as indicated above, very great, and the kindness of the noble owners has been equally so. There has always been an excellent keeper there; and Mr. Carvel, who has been there for some years, is a very praiseworthy man. Mr. Finch has a property adjoining, which has been under the care of Mr. Shakeshaft and his father for many years, and the estate has always been a safe home for foxes. The Horton property brings the country up to Salcey, and there the neutrality ceases.

It was a great treat to see Mr. Arkwright, with his worthy secretary, Mr. Harry Thornton, Mr. J. Gibbard, Captain Higgins, Messrs. Macan, Green, Orlebar, and a host of sporting farmers, to wit, Messrs. Battams (father and three sons), Harry Boulton, Lavender, Whitehead, Sanders Brothers, Joseph Robinson, Tom Turnell, Lucas Foster, Swannell, and many others, all horse fanciers, and splendidly mounted. No man was better supported than Mr. Arkwright.

In the early part of his reign I had a curious experience. We were on the Newport Pagnell side, in the neighbourhood of Hardmead, hunting a fox over the plough, when an eclipse of the sun took place; the birds went to roost, we were in semi-darkness and had to grope our way about, and it is puzzling to understand how we managed while this state of things continued. The country was strange to me; but a few of the followers and the Master advanced with the greatest difficulty.

In a very large grass field I caught sight of the fox and he appeared as much puzzled as we were. The hounds were in the same field with him; he then went into the next field; I rode at the fence, not a large one, but down my mare went on her side, and I on the ground, it seemed as if her eyes were eclipsed! We therefore declined any more jumping and the fox beat us.

Owing to the fact of the country where I hunted with the Oakley being large woods, with plains and fields intervening, it is not easy to write a description of the runs. If we made points from Cowper's Oak to Harrold, for instance, hounds would race from one wood to another, and it required a good horse to keep them in sight. Frequently a fox would run from the

Chase to Brayfield Furze, and go on to Houghton Lordship, where you might imagine you were in Leicestershire; then was the time to see Mr. Arkwright shine; he was quick, decisive, strong on his horse, and a rare stayer. One thing he used to do which was not to be commended; if he caught sight of his hunted fox he would ride at him. In the woods one would do much to bother a fox, and turn him if possible, from his foil; but to ride a fox down is a bad thing for hounds.

Huntsmen and their whippers-in will sometimes ride a fox and get him down in a field, and then have to fetch the hounds to kill him! Indeed, an instance of this is on record; but I am happy to say that in fifty years I never saw it done in the Grafton Hunt. "From scent to view" may well be considered to be the greatest reward a pack of hounds can have.

I was out in the Chase on the last day of cub-hunting, when we found an old fox; and he led us a good round and tried all he knew to shake off his pursuers, but they caught him in a little over an hour. We then went and got another fox afoot and began well with him. After going over some foiled ground the pack pressed and kept on pressing. Mr. Arkwright said, "He is a tough one, for a cub!" I replied, "He was a cub once,

but not this year!" "I'll bet you sixpence," he said; "Done!" cried I.

After a real case of earning him hounds caught this fox. Tom Whitmore was asked to decide the wager; but, not liking to give it against his master, he said he would take the head home and put it into the copper. In three days I received a letter containing the old fox's tooth, and sixpence! I had that tooth mounted as a scarf-pin, and I treasure it for its history.

On meeting Mr. Arkwright at the covert side he never failed to ask how I thought the pack was looking. "Are they heavier or lighter than the Grafton?" he would enquire. One morning, before we moved off, he said, "Oh! if you notice anything wrong to-day I wish you would tell me." I laughed, and said,

"To think that I could tell you anything!"

"I mean what I say," he replied, and rode away.

We were not long in finding and after a turn round two or three large quarters the hounds went away at a good pace, down to Warrington toll-bar; but they checked at the gate leading into the road. I waited a short distance from the gate, and, hearing a hound speak in the road, approached the gate, when, looking over, I saw

what took place. Mr. Arkwright came up and asked where they brought the line to. "These gate-bars," I said; "he has not gone down the road."

The hounds turned left-handed and hit the scent and on we went, but the fox beat us. We then went to find another. I was riding with Mr. Arkwright, and, pointing to a hound, I said, "What's this gentleman?"

"He is a 'Sportsman' dog," he replied, "what about him?"

"When the hounds reached the gate," said I, "up to which you came, he went down the road throwing his tongue; the others turned to him, and, after trying, would not have it. He then turned and looked back to see if they were coming, put his head down and spoke again; then he turned back."

"That," Mr. Arkwright said, "I saw him do the other day, and that is why I asked you to tell me if you saw anything wrong; he must go!"

I write this to show how vice gets into kennels. There was a dog in the Grafton pack called Sentinel, a son of Oakley Sportsman, he was the best Chase hound in the kennel. One night, going home, I asked Frank Beers if he had seen Sentinel do anything he ought not.

He said, "No, you would crab anything!" It was too true however; soon afterwards this hound led all the pack up a road for two hundred yards to two men standing therein. They told Beers that no fox had been there, and pointed to the hound which brought the pack on. Down went the character of that breed! My readers may see in Winfield's Lecture, which I shall give later on, what he thought of that failing.

The Oakley hunted in the Chase until "Primrose Day," when the ladies did not forget to mark the occasion.

Mr. Arkwright, at one time, had a small black-and-white pack; there was nothing dismal about them, the white predominating; they took honours at Peterborough, even when G. Carter was so strong with the Fitzwilliam Hounds.

Mr. Arkwright and Tom Whitmore, with the above-named pack, riding into the meeting-field, looked as much like fox-catching as one could imagine. This pack acted well in the woods, and hunted over the ploughs to the satisfaction of the Master and his followers. Two days in the Chase I remember very well. One was in the middle of the season. The meet was Cowper's Oak. It was not long before we hit on a fox and hunted from fox to fox for an hour and a half,

until one went to ground near the Deer-park rails on the north side. I asked: "Shall you bolt him, Captain?"

"No," he replied, "I will have him; if I bolt him he will go into another drain in five minutes; I don't believe in letting them off here, it is not fair for hounds, and, you see, there are too many foxes." He was accordingly accounted for.

We then trotted on to Easton Wood, found a fox directly, and went away close at him, leaving Easton Maudit to the right; he ran over the open, leaving the Castle on the left, the Chase also, nearly to Brayfield Furze; turned left-handed through Collier's Earn, down the Deer Park like flying, through the Chase to old Pond; turned right-handed out into the open, and hounds ran into their fox before he could reach Weston Wood; forty-five minutes without a check; it was getting dark.

On the other occasion the Deer Park was the meet, with the small pack. They had a great deal of running in the Chase without killing. In the afternoon the scent improved, and a fox went away to Olney Court, turned right-handed, ran parallel with the Chase up to Ravenstone Brook, over it and the turnpike road, through Jarvis's Wood, over Hanslope Field and ran into the fox

about thirty yards inside the forest. A very hard day finished with a capital run. Hounds a long way from home, had to return in the dark.

Many people used to come for spring hunting. Mr. and Mrs. Sharman, Mr. G. Higgins and Miss Higgins, Miss Whitworth and her sister, the Misses Higgins and Turvey, and Mr. Hill from Wollaston. Masters of hounds and huntsmen always came at the finish.

Bedford has long been a sporting county, and the home of the harrier for many a year. Captain Browning did good service in the Oakley country by keeping a good pack of hounds together.

Mr. J. Race has killed hundreds of hares ; he is a good sportsman too and a fine judge of a foxhound. He had a neighbour who was very good to him in finding hares and land to hunt over. Mr. Race told me that he thanked his friend, one day, saying how greatly obliged he was to him. The reply was, "All I can say is you ought to be if you are not !"

In old days there was another pack near Bedford, the Owner of which had an only daughter who was passionately fond of going out with the harriers. There was a young Magnate in Bedford who also had a great taste for 'Currant Jelly' ; and he found out the meets and attended very

regularly. The lady of the house saw what the loadstone was, and, not approving of any encouragement being given in a certain quarter, the Squire had no peace until the hounds were sent away. When the day fixed for the departure of the pack came the poor Squire took leave of them and sent them by road to London to be sold.

They had not been long gone before the Squire was informed that his daughter had eloped with the young Magnate. He at once summoned a messenger and started him to overtake the hounds and bring them back. "They are sure to want them when they come home!" he said. He was a good father!

Mr. Arkwright had for many years a good and faithful servant in Tom Whitmore. Few men were his superior in the kennel and he was a real good man in the field. The excellent pack he left in the Oakley kennel proved the knowledge he possessed in breeding hounds.

In concluding my feeble record I feel satisfied that everyone who was fortunate enough to know the late Captain Robert Arkwright could not fail to recognise in him a great man, possessing those qualities which constitute a gentleman, a soldier, and a sportsman; and knew him also to be a true friend to the Oakley country and its people.

THE PYTCHLEY, AND CHARLES PAYN.

In the days when this history commences good sport with the Pytchley was a matter of tradition only. Three changes took place without mending matters. Mr. Smith was said to be a good workman but he was handicapped by having bad horses and indifferent hounds. Sir Harry Goodrich held the Mastership for two years with matters getting worse.

Mr. George Payn had a great reputation and I once hacked twenty-four miles to a meet at Stamford Hall where a capital mount awaited me.

I could only come to the conclusion that the Squire, in assuming the *rôle* of huntsman, had greatly mistaken his vocation. We were on fine grass all day yet with no good result. The only person in the establishment who shewed skill was Ned Johnson as whipper-in. He soon afterwards came to Lord Southampton to whom he gave great satisfaction. Ned was offered the horn many times, but he always refused it, saying: "I know nothing of hunting and will never undertake it."

At this time people from the Pytchley hunted regularly with the Grafton, and they did not return to their own hunt until Charles Payn



CHARLES PAYN.

entered the Pytchley kennel. Then the good old character of that pack revived.

Charles, as a pupil of George Beers, went to a good school and made the most of that advantage. Charles was gallant and graceful in the saddle, sitting more firmly than any other man could be strapped on. He was strong in body and nerve, cool in the head, and patient in temper. The way in which he used to treat a large Field was admirable. The thrusters looked upon him as a fogleman, knowing full well that he would do his best and succeed if possible. All difficulties seemed to fade before Charles, and no man knew better how to catch a fox or how to breed hounds for that purpose.

I have seen him over the cream of the country race his fox to death in thirty-five minutes; and I have also seen him hunt a fox with a display of great science.

It fell to my good fortune to witness one of Charles Payn's finest runs; this was on the 29th of December, 1862.

The fox was found in a hedgerow in Preston fields. Hounds ran through the Church Wood, away at the bottom over Preston fields up to Mantel's Heath, through the covert; they skirted Knightley Wood, leaving Farthingstone Village

on the left, pointing for Lichborough, where the fox was headed, and turned over the road leading to Maidford, with Seawell Wood in his face, which he objected to ; so ran the bottom over the plough, and through Grimscote Heath to Grimscote Village, Cold Higham on his left, into Astcote Thorns, pointing for Duncote, and turned over the old Chester road at the end of Duncote lane, with his head straight for Tiffeld Allotments, where he was headed, and turned, with Caldecote on his right, crossing the Towcester and Northampton road at the old Brickyard, over the hill through the old road Plantation, to Shoseley Grounds. He was again headed by a shepherd, ran the lane and by the side of the road to Cappenham Bridge, over it, turned down Paulerspury Meadows (here we had more than one fox) into Alderton fields, and up to the road leading from Alderton to Paulerspury ; this is the extreme point. He turned and ran parallel with the turnpike road nearly to Cuttle Mill, where the fox crossed the road and the Mill-dam and ran to Heathencote field and Wood Burcote ; he turned to the right, crossed the old Chester road again at Heathencote Toll-bar, through Heathencote and Easton Park to Hulcote Village, where we gave it up.

It was a fourteen-mile point, and considered so good a run that I was requested to write it out for the annals of the Pytchley Hunt.

I well remember Charles Payn's speaking of digging out foxes;—like Mr. Arkwright, he did not care for leaving them after a good run—he said that there was a drain between two hunts, at which, by agreement, neither party used to dig. After a time there arose a necessity for opening it all through and laying it afresh, and when the drain was taken up thirteen masks of foxes which had died in it were found there !

Charles was a loss to the Pytchley country when he went into Wales ; it was a case where two suns could not shine in one firmament, Captain Thomson being one and Charles Payn the other. Although he had a good place, financially, with Sir Watkin Wynn, he liked the Pytchley better. I once went to see him at Wynnstay, and saw the crack dog Painter ; he was very smart, but of a bad colour, and too effeminate in appearance ; I saw others in the kennel which I liked better. In the Pytchley Charles had a good sort in the Pillagers ; he used to say that they were so good and honest, and he left fifty couples of hounds in the Pytchley kennel which would run nothing but a fox.

The last time I saw Charles Payn was at George Beers' funeral; it was pleasing to hear the warm terms in which he spoke of his old master. He said: "This was a great man in his profession, and I owe a great deal to him. All that man taught me was worth learning; and everything he told me I found to be correct."

CAPTAIN ANSTRUTHER THOMSON.

There could not be a greater wonder in creation than the gallant Captain. Handicapped as he was by weight, it was astonishing to witness his performance over, or rather through, a country; he was, of course, obliged to creep and squeeze through a good deal, and very wisely guarded his knees for that purpose. No man could hunt a fox with more patience than he, neither did anyone ride better cattle. It was my good luck to see Captain Thomson perform in the Pytchley—and also in the Bicester—country; the latter, I think, suited him the better.

In 1866 I saw him to advantage in a run from Preston High Wood. The hounds ran at a great pace up to Canons Ashby, away over the large grass grounds to Eydon. I complimented the Captain on the "little horse" (as I called it)

which he was riding. "Yes," he said, "there is no surrender about him."

We ran through Eydon on to Edgcote, through that village, and killed the fox in good style near Banbury. It was so good a run and so well done that it was most creditable to the huntsman and pack. I believe that was his last season.

On the retirement of Captain Thomson, which took place far too soon, a succession of changes followed. An old friend of mine, a member of the hunt, wrote very doleful letters upon the prospect, until the good day arrived for Lord Spencer to take the Mastership and to put Will Goodall in charge.

All Pytchley men look back with pleasure to those good days with their favourite Master and huntsman.

CHAPTER XVI.

H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES—H.R.H.
PRINCE ARTHUR (THE DUKE OF
CONNAUGHT)—H.M. THE EX-QUEEN
OF NAPLES—H.I.M. THE EMPRESS
OF AUSTRIA.

IN 1870 His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales paid a visit to Earl Spencer at Althorp Park, and hunted with the Pytchley Hounds at Stowe-Nine-Churches.

I was asked by Lord Spencer to conduct the Prince through the wood, and to obtain a good start with the hounds when the fox should go away. On being presented to the Prince, who was most affable, and full of enquiries about the surrounding property, I informed him that the parish of Stowe-Nine-Churches belonged to the Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy, whereupon he manifested the greatest interest; and I was

able to give information which was very gratifying to His Royal Highness.

When the hounds were put into the wood I took up my usual position near the earths, which are situated upon an eminence, as it is likely that the fox will ascertain for certain if the door of his dwelling is closed against him before he takes his departure from the covert.

It so happened that the surrounding part of the wood had been then recently cut, which gave an opening through which a good view of the country round was obtainable. We had not been long there before a gentleman-in-waiting came to me, and said, "You had better go on." "Not yet," I replied; the Prince still keeping up the conversation. Very shortly the same gentleman came again and repeated the order, to which I replied, "Presently!" He then said, "Look at all these country people coming on foot."

"Well," I said, "this is one of the most loyal parts of Her Majesty's dominions, let them have a look at the Prince!" I could see that there was no objection on the part of His Royal Highness by his smiling at the idea.

The people came, and formed a half-circle;—fine fellows they were, too—and feasted their eyes upon the Prince.

Then I heard a halloo at the top of the wood. "Now we must go!" I said. In those days the wood was much larger than it is at present, and we had to go up a very soft riding in which there was a very nasty bog. I made all the signs I could for the Prince to avoid it by getting on the side, but the horse did not answer to the rein and floundered into the worst part of it; by good horsemanship the Prince just managed to save a fall.

When we reached the top of the wood the fox had been headed back by the people and had gone into the covert again. I then said, "This fox will now go through the wood and out at the other end; we must go at best pace back again." "I will go anywhere but through that bog with you!" the Prince remarked, with a smile. We then made good haste to the Weedon corner of the wood, where I had the satisfaction of saying, "Yonder he goes!" as fine a fox as ever was seen. My duties ended there for the day.

In the following season the Prince of Wales came to hunt with the Duke of Grafton. On this occasion Bradden was the fixture, a very popular meet. I was told that a very large and aristocratic assemblage was there, but,

having no great liking for a crowd, I was not present.

Knowing the draw, I saw the fox away, and caught the hounds when there was a momentary check caused by a flock of sheep. At that point I was asked by Lord Charles FitzRoy to pilot the Prince of Wales.

I was fully sensible of the honour, but felt it to be a responsibility; on joining His Royal Highness he graciously mentioned our last meeting.

Having long before made up my mind that, when a man is upon a "hunter," the safest place in the hunting-field is close to the hounds, I asked the Prince to gallop fast to get to the front; and this, the pace not being great, we accomplished in a few fields.

The hounds then began to run over the large pastures near to Bradden. A real good stake-and-bound fence presented itself to us, with the ditch on the taking-off side. Over the Prince went! and I never saw a fence better jumped. On reaching the top of the hill there was a very nasty double fence which had to be jumped, so I gave the lead over, and the Prince landed well into a large grass field where there was every sign of a run. Hounds had settled down and matters were going very nicely when the hounds

turned right-handed and set their heads straight for a brook. Having made up my mind I raced down, jumping a fence into the meadow and charged the brook, and was no sooner over than I turned round and called out: "Send him at it!" The Prince rode readily at it and jumped the brook in gallant style. The pack ran up to Blakesley Village and did not do much afterwards. His Royal Highness was charmed; he declared that he had never jumped such a good piece of water in his life. Lord Royston and another gentleman in attendance got into trouble over the same place. The Prince informed me that Lord Royston was not content with fewer than two falls in a day! The weather was very hot, and no sport of any account followed.

In addition to being pilot I was timekeeper, and the time came for the Prince to leave for the station, when he expressed himself very kindly and left for the train.

The honour of being within speaking distance of the Prince did not again fall to my lot for twenty years after that day, when His Royal Highness came to stay with Sir Thomas Hesketh at Easton Neston, and hunted from there, on which occasion he came and shook hands with me and spoke most cordially.

H.R.H. PRINCE ARTHUR.

In the season following the one last recorded His Royal Highness Prince Arthur (now Duke of Connaught) paid the Duke of Grafton a visit, and hunted two days with his Grace's hounds, on which occasion I was honoured by a request to attend His Royal Highness in the field.

On the first day we found a fox and ran by Grimscote Heath pointing for Seawell; the fox ran along the little brook-side parallel with the wood, until it entered a ravine. I happened to know of a place where one could creep down and get up the bank with a scramble, and this we did, thinking that the fox would go into Maidford Wood. We were no sooner over than the hounds came to us. The Field had to go on some distance in order to get round. Instead of going into the wood as anticipated, the fox ran between Seawell and Maidford Coverts. I shall never forget the Prince's delight when he discovered our advantage.

The hounds raced for a mile into Blakesley field, where the dry ploughs hindered them, and Beers joined us. Turning left-handed hounds ran on again nicely over the Foxley Bottom and the meeting-field, up to Grub's Coppice, straight

through, and on to Cold Higham. It was a hot day, and I thought that the nice grey mare which the Prince was riding might not feel very fresh, and I asked His Royal Highness what he thought about it; he answered, "Oh, all right, your horse is not tired yet!" We then ran past Cold Higham, pointing for Stowe-Nine-Churches, when I saw some large ploughed fields ahead; I said, "We shall check directly," and we did. Many questions followed as to how I knew the hounds would check. The ploughed fields were very dry, which saved the fox's life.

On the following day, a Saturday, the Prince was out again, but only for half a day. A fox was found, but there was not much running. Finding another at Colonel FitzRoy's covert, with a capital scent, hounds ran very hard about the large grass fields at Grafton Regis, on to Alderton, very fast over the meadows, and up to Stoke Bruerne House, round the large park, the fox wanting to get back to Grafton, but he was headed at the river and turned towards Stoke Bruerne Locks; very shortly he came into the road, with the pack running in view.

No sooner had the Prince seen them than away he went at full speed after them until the fox turned left-handed, wanting to reach the Park



THE EX-QUEEN OF NAPLES.

Wood. A very stiff clipped hedge had to be jumped, which His Royal Highness's horse refused; I lost no time in giving a lead. Hounds were still in view, screaming after the fox, Frank Beers cheering his very best. There were two young ladies racing in front, one with her hair down her back. "Look at those ladies!" the Prince said, and gave chase; in two fields the fox was pulled down. The ladies ran in a dead heat, the Prince about three lengths behind. I never saw a more lively finish in my life. The Prince was obliged to leave at once; he shook hands all round, and left a very pleasing impression of his riding and charming manners.

THE EX-QUEEN OF NAPLES.

In the month of December, 1875, Her Majesty the ex-Queen of Naples came to England for fox-hunting. Her Majesty took up her residence at a house called "Park View," near to Towcester, and quite in the centre of the Grafton Hunt, whence she attended many of the open meets.

The ex-Queen's first appearance in the hunting field took place at Castlethorpe. Although she was a splendid horsewoman, quite devoid of fear, had ridden at the head of an army and had been under fire, yet her Majesty had never ridden

over a country. Mr. Frederick Allen, the riding master, had given her many lessons in the art, and great credit was due to him for teaching the Queen so successfully. Mr. Allen also provided the hunters; these were two chesnut horses called respectively Pilot and Pickles, which could not be surpassed in any way for the purpose of carrying the Queen.

Quite unexpectedly I was asked by the Queen herself to act as her Majesty's pilot. From Pike's Gorse a fox went away, which happened to be the first her Majesty had seen going away from covert. To my great amusement she exclaimed, with great excitement: "I do see the fox! I do see the fox!!" I then requested her Majesty's attention and rode over a few small clipped fences. I soon found, however, that my part was to get out of the way, and on the many occasions when I had the honour of piloting the Royal Lady she never seemed to find the fences too large.

We had a good day's sport and killed a fox. When the hounds caught the fox the Queen said: "Let us go away, I do not care for this part of it." Her behest was, of course, obeyed.

As time went on it became apparent that the ex-Queen was passionately fond of hunting, and

the bigger the fence the better she liked it ! We were away with a fox in a hurry one day, when a fence and a brook came early in the run. The huntsman and the Field did not face it. I took it, and went over ; the Queen jumped it with a good start ; we then jumped more fences, and were riding along when I heard myself called by name, and, greatly excited, her Majesty said, " There is nobody with the hounds but ourselves, not even the huntsman or the whipper-in ; if my Sister were here she would love it ! " I often heard remarks of this kind, and in the spring it was announced that the Empress of Austria intended to pay a visit to England.

From time to time most amusing remarks would fall from the ex-Queen's lips. Once she said, " I do see some of the gentlemen go and look at the hedge, then they go to another place and look, and then they go over, is that better for them ? "

The performances of Pilot and Pickles were so entirely satisfactory that I dissuaded her Majesty from riding any other horses. Her style of riding was only suitable for a perfect horse, possessed of the most accomplished manners. After a time a young Irish horse called Chit arrived ; I observed that there was a great longing on the part of the Royal Lady to ride this animal,

but I threw cold water upon the idea. However, one day the Queen said, "May I ride Chit?"

"No, your Majesty," I replied, "I really dare not let you ride him, he is a horse not at all suited to the purpose, and I hope your Majesty will not mind my saying so." A very gracious reply settled the matter.

In about a fortnight afterwards Chit was out, being ridden by a smart man, properly attired, and having every appearance of being a good horseman. I enquired of the ex-Queen what part this man was to perform. "He is to ride Chit after me!" was the reply.

"Has your Majesty insured him?" I enquired, with simulated anxiety.

"Oh, no!" the Queen said, nonchalantly; "he can ride."

"I do not dispute that, your Majesty; but he cannot ride upon Chit to follow *you*."

"Now, I do assure you, he can ride beautifully!" insisted the Queen.

"Well," I added, still unconvinced, "I must say I should be better satisfied if the man were insured, because he is bound to come to grief!"

We found a fox at Allithorn and raced over the grass in the direction of Weston. In about five fields came the brook; I reached and jumped

it first, the Queen flew over on Pickles, and then, going up the hill for Weedon Wood, her Majesty called out anxiously to me: "Chit is going up the meadow!"

"Let him go," I cried; "he will be caught. Come along, please."

After the run, which was a good one, was over, the Queen made enquiries, and told me that the man had been knocked off.

On the following Friday Chit was out again. We had a very trying day for horses. We ran fast over the Westbury ploughs pointing for Evenley, turned right-handed, all going well, and we in the front.

I heard her Majesty calling out: "My man will be killed!" I looked, and over the last fence, which was a clipped hedge with a broad top, a ploughed field on either side of it, the horse had fallen and lay upon his rider. I said: "Come along, your Majesty, it is a very soft place and will not hurt."

We soon killed the fox, and I asked 'what was to be done now.' "Next time will finish him," I said, with mock seriousness. "Oh," replied the Queen, "he shall go by the road. I do see that you know better than I do; I am glad that you would not let me ride Chit."

Riding home from Stowe-Nine-Churches one evening with the Empress of Austria and the ex-Queen I was asked if I could get them a glass of milk. Knowing a nice old farmer, a tenant of the Duke of Grafton, at Grimscote, I rode to his house, which, being upon a bank, prevented access on horseback to the front door; I therefore went into the farmyard, where I met Mr. Gibbins, and told him that I had come to ask for a glass of milk for the two Royal Ladies. Of course I received a ready response, and on the arrival of their Majesties they were perforce obliged to ride up to the back door, where the hostess appeared with a jug of milk and tumblers, and handed the refreshment over the paling where the horses were standing up to their knees in straw. The idea struck me what a nice picture it would have made! The good people were deeply sensible of the honour done them, and the Empress and Queen thanked them most graciously.

The ex-King of Naples was not a rider of much experience, but after a time he took the field and was indebted to Lady Knightley for showing him a great deal of sport in the Fawsley country.

The ex-Queen hunted two seasons and part of a third, and then, owing to her Majesty's health giving way, she was obliged to retire in the month

of January. For some time previously her Majesty had only been able to take part in one run, and on that occasion she had to retire early.

I was asked one day, after the ex-Queen had returned home, by a lady visitor from Yorkshire, a Mrs. Clarke, if I would pilot her; of course I said, "With pleasure." A few minutes later Miss Hesketh asked if she might follow me, to whom I returned the same reply. We had a real good run and killed the fox seven or eight miles from the find; and both ladies were up at the death and enjoyed the run thoroughly.

The ex-Queen was very fond of chamois shooting, and used to entertain me greatly by relating her excursions after the wary animals. I enquired how her Majesty managed the rifle, and was told that she had a man to carry that.

During the summer following Her Majesty's first season's hunting she had a beautiful picture painted for me showing the chamois on their native mountains. And later on a companion picture of a lively hunting episode arrived, both most beautifully painted by Benno Adom.

H.I.M. THE EMPRESS OF AUSTRIA.

In March, 1876, Her Imperial Majesty the Empress of Austria paid a visit to England, and

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joined her sister, the ex-Queen of Naples, in the Grafton country, the ex-Queen having commenced hunting there before Christmas.

Easton Neston House, with its fine stabling, was taken for the Empress and suite; but so numerous was the latter that some of the gentlemen-in-waiting had to be accommodated in Towcester, about a mile distant.

On the arrival of the Empress, on a Monday, a private day was arranged with the hounds in order that Her Majesty might lose no time in commencing the longed-for sport.

On Tuesday Wakefield Lawn was the fixture, and as good news spreads quickly a number of people assembled from all parts; and of course there was a goodly show of ladies anxious to welcome so lovely a specimen of their sex.

Colonel FitzRoy of Grafton Regis did the honours as Master of the hunt, in the absence of the Duke of Grafton, who was abroad, and of Lord Charles FitzRoy, who was in attendance upon Her Majesty the Queen at Windsor.

The ex-Queen of Naples brought the Empress to me, and introduced me to Her Majesty.

The Empress, addressing me, said, "It is all through you, Mr. Elliott, that I have come to England!"



THE EMPRESS OF AUSTRIA.

"Your Majesty," I replied, "I cannot conceive how I deserve that honour."

"I will tell you," said she; "my sister has been riding with you, and you have given her so much pleasure in the field, that every night, after you had had a run, she did write to me and say so much about it that I thought I must come and see what it was like!"

"Your Majesty will be heartily received," I said, "and no pains will be spared to find good sport for you."

We then went to Fire Furze, a nice covert, which has the advantage of being situate in a rich vale of grass; and it was a very favourite place with the Grafton Masters for getting away to after spending time in the forest. However, on this occasion this good covert proved to be blank. We then drew on to another, also belonging to the Duke of Grafton, called the Colonel's Covert; there we found and ran smartly, but shortly, to ground.

We then went to Stoke Park and found there, and went away with a good scent, but not over our best country. Still, there was a good deal of jumping, which afforded the Royal Ladies much pleasure. Their pilots had enough to do to keep with the hounds. Without jumping it was

impossible to do so, although people might ride to points and not be far behind. That style, however, did not commend itself to the Empress and the ex-Queen, to whom the pace and the jumping gave the greatest satisfaction.

Whilst we were running for our fox my attention was engrossed in looking forward, and I merely turned my head quickly from time to time for a glance at Her Majesty's skirt upon the right side of a fence. But, coming to a momentary check, to my surprise the Empress rode up to me. Greatly concerned, I enquired where the Queen (whom I had been piloting as usual) was. Her Majesty answered: "I have been riding after you for some time; my sister is with the huntsman." In point of fact Frank Beers and I had exchanged the Empress for the Queen. After killing our fox, the meet being so late (two o'clock), we gave up and rode home. The Empress and Queen together, with myself in attendance.

I was asked to look over the stud of ten horses which had been brought from Vienna for the use of the Empress, and I was requested to state my opinion of them to Her Majesty. The first horse she mentioned happened to be the best; but the two next I was unable to pass, and about

the next, I told the Empress I was puzzled.

"Why are you?" she asked.

"I hardly know what your Majesty could bring her for," I replied.

"Well, that is very strange; the Emperor asked me to include her, she is a great favourite."

"Perhaps His Majesty thought that a sea voyage and change of climate would do her good," I ventured to suggest; "but she is not a hunter."

"I quite agree with you," the Empress answered.

Four horses only in the stud were at all suitable for carrying Her Majesty in the hunting field. Buyers were sent off to Lincolnshire and elsewhere to procure hunters.

During her visit the Empress had some very good days. The best certainly was from Brackley Gorse, fifty minutes over a very fine country. Her Majesty was well mounted and rode splendidly, although she was at a disadvantage at the finish from having taken a wrong turn. The Honourable Mrs. Grosvenor, piloted by her husband, was in a very enviable position when the hounds went into Whistley Wood, thus maintaining her reputation for riding well to hounds.

At the end of the visit the Empress and the ex-Queen met the Bicester Hounds at Thorpe

Mandeville, where there assembled the largest Field, perhaps, which was ever seen in that hunt. Lord Valentia was Master, and Stovin huntsman. With the first fox we had a scurry, but were altogether rather unlucky. It turned out to be one of those days when Master and huntsman are anxious for sport but cannot succeed in obtaining it. Mr. Slater Harrison of Shelswell, piloted the Empress.

Her Imperial Majesty could hardly be considered so fortunate in her stud as the ex-Queen. During the day with the Bicester the Empress came to me and said that she wished to give her sister a horse. I remarked: "A very nice gift, your Majesty, if the Queen can ride it; if not it would be a "white elephant" to her; allow me to suggest that the Queen should have a day on it as a trial." This was acceded to, but the hunter was found to be too headstrong, so the kind offer was declined.

The Empress was possessed of great physical strength, which enabled her to ride a pulling horse; in fact, I think she liked the strong exercise. Great liberality was shown throughout, and the Empress gave a large sum of money to be run for, which started the Grafton Hunt Steeple-chases, which have been an annual fixture ever

since. Nothing could be more sad, nor create truer, deeper sentiments of sympathy and regret than the tragic end of that noble Lady.

I was told by one of the Empress' attendants that she was a great Alpine climber, a recreation the Emperor also much enjoyed, making arduous ascents. On one occasion the attainment by His Majesty of a peak of great elevation was related to the Empress. Without comment she set out and reached the same peak, and on a table of rock Her Majesty deposited her watch and chain and left them there until the Emperor ascended again the next year.

It is recorded in history that the Empress hunted first with the Pytchley; but that was not the case. Wakefield Lawn was the meet where Her Majesty remarked that 'she thought she must come to see what it was like,' after the ex-Queen had written in such glowing terms of the sport. I must, therefore, claim for the Grafton country the honour of introducing Her Imperial Majesty to foxhounds in England.

It may be said of that illustrious Lady that charity and loving-kindness held possession of her even unto death.

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CHAPTER XVII.

HUNTING LADIES—THE BICESTER —
MR. T. T. DRAKE, M.F.H.—TOM
WINFIELD, HUNTSMAN—MR. T. T.
DRAKE, JUN., M.F.H. — VISCOUNT
VALENTIA, M.F.H.—BARON CHES-
HAM, M.F.H.—STOVIN, AND OTHER
HUNTSMEN—THE EARL OF JERSEY
—DICK PAINTER, HORSEDEALER.

THE Grafton has rivalled other hunts in its attractions for the Ladies, and particularly so since it has been honoured by the presence of Royalty.

Having previously mentioned the first lady whom I remember to have seen perform in the hunting-field I may, perhaps, record my first essay in piloting a lady. It would be in the late 'fifties' that a friend came to me at Creslow, and, to my great astonishment, asked me if I would

pilot a Miss Dickens, who was a member of an old Northamptonshire family. I agreed to the proposal on condition that the maker of it would keep close at hand, and put the lady upon a good horse ; both which conditions he promised to fulfil.

We made a start and the hounds ran very hard indeed for about forty minutes, and killed the fox ; and Miss Dickens was presented with the brush after riding well all through the run. After that I had several more days with her, and found out that men are not the only riders to hounds.

In the year 1860, Mrs. Pilgrim, a resident in the hunt, honoured me with her company, and, being mounted on the best-bred Irish hunters that money could buy, it was not difficult for that lady to fly over the country. With no hesitation about beginning, riding into a place, and keeping with hounds, it gave me the greatest pleasure to pilot her during fifteen seasons ; and only on three occasions did I lose any time on her account. Some splendid sport was enjoyed during those fifteen years ; and after Mrs. Pilgrim had retired from the hunting-field she remained a strict preserver of foxes at Akeley.

Many famous riders followed. The Honourable Mrs. Grosvenor (now Lady Ebury) would

always be seen in the front, piloted by her husband, the Honourable R. Grosvenor (now Lord Ebury) who was a capital horseman.

Mrs. Byass, mounted on the best of cattle, was a fine rider. The Honourable Mrs. Candy rode with me after I broke my collar-bone, professing to be nervous; but I could not detect in her any failing of that kind. I had the pleasure of riding before Lady Hesketh through the first run she saw, and a real good run it was! and her ladyship, like other ladies, was greatly pleased with the sport. Lady Wake hunted for a few seasons and rode very nicely.

When my readers go through the following list they must think the Grafton Hunt was highly appreciated by the sporting fair-sex.

The Honourable Mrs. Campbell, the Honourable Mrs. Robarts, Miss Campbell, Mrs. Lambton, Mrs. Whaley, Mrs. Ryan, Mrs. Gould, Mrs. Simpson, Mrs. Hunt, Miss Dryden, Miss Roper, Mrs. Knapp, Miss Judkins, and Mrs. Watts were all Grafton ladies. Many others have come to the country since, and are still going well, with the Honourable Mrs. E. S. Douglas-Pennant, the wife of the present popular Master. Mrs. Fitzroy, Mrs. Atkinson, Miss Berchett, Mrs. Wilder, Miss Wake, Mrs. Hatfeild Harter, piloted

by Mr. Harter a splendid performer over a country, and Miss Whitehouse.

Great credit is due to the Ladies for the way in which they rode. As a rule they are much more attentive than the men, and ride with more nerve. In all the good runs which I saw, after the Ladies took to riding, it was marvellous how forward they finished.

There is no doubt that a lady who wishes to ride hard should have a pilot; not because he can ride better than she can, but at times when there are things to do which a lady cannot manage a pilot is of service.

Mrs. Bunbury (who is now the wife of Baron Max de Tuyll) was first-rate, and an extraordinary performer alone, taking her own line and always going well. She could turn a hound better than most men, having hunted so much with her father, Mr. Watson, who at the present time is, I believe, the senior gentleman huntsman in Ireland, in which country Mrs. Bunbury first learned to enjoy the sport.

Miss Tennant, Miss Peel, Miss Watson, and Miss Elliott also rode well.

There was one gentleman, Captain Robert Oliver of Sholebroke, who, being lame, rode on a side-saddle for a few seasons in a very able

manner. In course of time he became thoroughly disabled, so he kept three pairs of fast harness-horses and drove regularly, and saw a good deal of the sport.

THE BICESTER.

I first visited the Bicester Hounds in the year 1844, on a day when the fixture was at Trafford. Mr. Thomas Tyrwhitt Drake had been Master for some years, and had gained the goodwill of his farmers and followers. He enjoyed the highest reputation which a country gentleman could possess, namely, that he was a good landlord, and a fine sportsman. After being sufficiently long at the head of affairs he had become the owner of a fine pack of hounds. Everything was of the best, the men were well mounted, clever, intelligent, and civility itself.

On this occasion Mrs. Drake was also out, and when I first caught sight of her was shaking hands with a fine old yeoman named Greaves.

No one could help being struck with the gentlemen at the meet. There were Lord Jersey, of Bay Middleton fame; the Hon. P. S. Pierrepont of Evenley; Mr. Cox, and his son; Mr. Slater Harrison of Shelswell; the Rev. John Drake, brother of the Squire; and many



T. TYRWHITT-DRAKE, ESQ.

others, including the young Squire, Mr. Thomas Tyrwhitt Drake, jun.; the Rev. Mr. Bennett; also a number of hard-riding farmers—Messrs. Cowper, Selby, Hitchcock, and his son George Hitchcock, Ivens of Eydon, Horn of Trafford, and many others.

It happened to be the last day of the season. We did not readily find, but at last Thenford Gorse proved a success, and away we went over some large fields and strong fences. The young Squire was all on the go and, jumping a fence on my left, down he fell, horse and all, heavily. I caught the horse and took it back to him, asking if he were hurt. He said, "No, he has not hurt me, but I think he must have shaken himself; it generally happens the other way." That was my introduction to one of my most agreeable acquaintances.

We had a real good thirty minutes, and ran the fox to ground in the Grafton country, then hunted by Lord Southampton. Mr Drake said that he would not put a dog in, and would leave it to me to see that the fox might not be interfered with. A more gentlemanly man in the field there could not be; everything went so pleasantly, and great confidence was placed in the huntsman, Tom Winfield.

On the last day of the season, in 1846, I was out at Trafford Bridge. We went to Warden Hill to draw. Winfield informed me that his Master would not come near him that day, for, "He is riding a horse which kicks hounds," said he. "I had my orders yesterday, before we left, to be out at Warden Kennel; if I go north or south I know what to do."

When we reached the covert he said, "Aloo! creep in." Tom never threw his hounds in, and a fox was soon afoot, and, after a round or two, the fox went away on the Edgcote side. There stood Jem Hills, of the Heythrop, who told Tom that it was a dog fox. The hounds were soon down at the Edgcote Mansion, round it to the left, and into some long flat meadows, running hard. My mare set her foot in a trench, and end over end she went. In getting up she pulled my right foot on to her shoulder, I was hanging on the near side, my foot having left the stirrup and gone through the leathers. Several people round did not know what to do; but Winfield soon settled it, he lifted me by the shoulders and I was up in a second. This was the first and only time I was hung up.

We then ran through Edgcote Coverts, away into the Grafton country, where Tom and his fine pack of hounds were seen to advantage going on

the left of Sulgrave, bearing towards Allithorn, over Stuchbury, leaving Greatworth on the right, when hounds began to run for the fox, leaving Greatworth Hall on the left, close past the earths, and soon after I jumped through a thick hedge, and called to what I took to be a man—but it proved to be a scarecrow or ‘Mawkin’—and asked if he had seen the fox. Winfield, who was close by, was greatly amused, and said, “My father once asked a ‘Mawkin’ if he had seen the fox!” We soon had the fox in view, and Duster and Grasper were not long in rolling him over at Halse.

The one and only instance in which I saw one pack of hounds join another happened thus: The Grafton were in the woods near Silverstone on a Saturday afternoon running a fox, when I remarked to Simpson that our pack had greatly increased in number. In a few minutes Winfield and others came up. The meeting of the huntsmen was very hearty, and after shaking hands Simpson said, “Now Mr. Winfield please take charge.”

“Oh!” said Winfield, “I could not think of it in your country; please go on.”

Mr. Drake’s hounds had brought their fox some miles; but for want of scent the united pack did not get on. Winfield therefore asked

to have a separation when convenient. Simpson trotted to the turnpike road; then counted his pack, the huntsmen took leave of each other, each turned towards home and every hound followed its own master.

TOM WINFIELD'S LECTURE.

At the end of the month of June 1847 I went by appointment to the Bicester kennels with Tom Smith to see Winfield and Mr. Drake's pack. Tom was one of nature's gentlemen, a man rather angular in figure, tall, but not very heavy. No man was more intelligent or possessed a more agreeable voice than Winfield. In conversation he was extremely bright and entertaining; he raised his voice at times, and emphasised charmingly when necessary.

On our way, which led through Tusmore Park, we saw the hounds coming to meet us, and we met in the middle of the park; just as we approached a most lovely hound came bounding along towards us. She was grey, with a darker spot upon her near side, and when she met us she jumped around our horses and gave us a pleasant greeting.

Smith remarked: "If all their hounds are like this one, they are worth looking at."



TOM WINFIELD.

We then had a hearty reception from the huntsman, and a chat on our way to Bucknell.

Entering the kennel, we began our inspection of the young hounds, and received every information from Winfield, who was very eloquent and learned in pedigrees. On finishing the entry, 11½ couples, I said: "A short lot!"

"Oh! I could not make room for more," said Winfield, "our old hounds are so fresh and good."

On this occasion Winfield was charming, talking, with great glee, over the days we had hunted together during the two previous seasons. I said: "Tom, I know more about hounds running (and that is not much) than I do about them when standing still. Be so good as to draw out your best puppy and shew it to me."

"I will, with pleasure. Let Gratitude out, Ben. There, sir, that is what I call a beauty. Is not that a beautiful head? set on a neck which looks longer than it is, because her shoulders are long and flat, pointing to her ribs; they should be that way, not towards their ears; and I like them light at the points; no animal I have to do with can get along with comfort if it has heavy shoulders. Then the next point is the elbows; not pinned in, nor stand too much out; these are just right.

"Now, come in front ; look at those legs, you see they are straight, don't you ? It is a great point that this bone should continue right down ; if they are weak at the knee they don't stay here.

"Then the feet ; of course they are of great importance ; many hounds are spoiled by being tied up at walk. My Master is very lucky about that ; his tenants in Cheshire, and our farmers, are very good to the puppies."

Tom stroked the hound very hard from head to stern, and ran it through his hand so firmly that he nearly lifted her off the flags. He then proceeded : "That is what I call a beautiful feather on her stern. Standing here, you see what grand ribs she has ! Look at her strong back ! a trifle arched ; I don't like the back to dip, it looks so hollow as they get old. Those hind-quarters you cannot beat ; what a piece of ground she covers ! I never put a weedy one forward."

"How is she bred ?" I asked.

"Grasper and Legacy," Winfield replied ; "you know Grasper, I remember what you said about him that Trafford Bridge day. Let him out, Ben. There, sir ! that is what I call a fox-hound !" "I remember him," I said, "it requires a strong dog to keep pace with him."

Winfield then said, "Mr. Smith, two years ago

we had the best run in the Vale that we can remember, from Claydon Woods. Our gentlemen all said so.

"We found our fox in the big wood, and he went right away over the best grass we have, and you cannot say more for any country; no matter where he went he could not go wrong, they raced him all the way, and that hound and Juvenal frightened me to death. Neck and neck they went when they were running for the fox. At last they ran up to him and got him in view; he was making for a covert with a newly-cut hedge. The fox jumped it and this dog caught him on the top of the fence and rolled over with him."

I enquired, "What were you frightened at, Tom, about those two hounds?" "Why," he answered, "if they had gone over the scent I would never have bred from them! The gentlemen came to me and said 'what a clever man I was!' Oh dear! gentlemen, I said, I had nothing to do with it, they did it all themselves.

"You never know what hounds are going to do until they are through their second season; they become opinionated, and what I call conceited; some of my best have not begun in a hurry. I remember what you said about old Freedom over that dry plough, sir. Let her out, Ben.

There, that's one of Lord Southampton's old sort which he had in the Quorn country, Hector and Faithless. Hector, a son of Hazard, bred by the Marquis of Tavistock.

"You remember Duster, sir? Let him out, Ben. Now you carry Duster and Gratitude in your head and you will never be at a loss to know a good hound!

"Let some of the old ones out, Ben. Now if it were not for these old hounds, and my good master I would not be a huntsman another day! They won't run anything but a fox, not they! We have a lot of riot in this country, so many hares! and these old hounds hate them as much as I do.

"I don't care for too many young hounds, Mr. Smith; we have a lot of hard-riding men in this country, and when they press upon the pack the young ones are apt to get beyond it; and the horses will press if there are hounds going on, right or wrong; then it takes time to get back on the line; your fox goes a mile while you are doing it; on a bad scenting day it's soon all over.

"Our Master never says anything to these hard riders; there is Mr. George Hitchcock, he calls him "Scorcher," he and our young Squire (what a good sort he is!), have nick-names for all

of them; there is Mr. Cowper, the draper, from Banbury; Master Tom says to him, "Good morning, 'Ragman'!" and to his brother, "How are you, 'Farnborough'?"

"I hear our gentlemen say Lord Southampton talks to his Field; but, oh dear, sir! if he had what I have to put up with, he would, what I call, 'go mad!' We get so many young Oxford gentlemen with us; they are a great trial to a huntsman. They hire of Symonds, Seckham, and Tollit, and get some funny horses, and ride very wild.

"When hounds run they start; but they get into a ruck, and it seems no fun if they are not together; they don't care about hounds one bit, but they will go on the line. I often wish they would have it to themselves, it would be more comfortable for me and my hounds. My master says nothing to them, I say nothing; they are such nice young gentlemen, if it were not for that. They always behave well to me, very!

"Now, let my lord come and see what I have to put up with; he would never find fault with his Field!"

Tom looks at his watch and says it is 1.30. "I told Mrs. Winfield to get some luncheon, and she is very punctual," he adds.

After a pleasant afternoon we rode home in the cool of the evening, singing the praises of Winfield and his pack.

When I was young I attended lectures because my parents said it was good for me ; but of all I then heard I remember not a single sentence ; yet I can very well remember all Tom Winfield said. This is, to my mind, a complete triumph of the living animal over the dead letter !

When Mr. Drake gave up the pack was sold and realised a great price, amounting to as much as Mr. Osbaldeston's sale made, putting the bogus sale out of the question.

Mr. Drake spoke to Winfield about obtaining a huntsman's place for him ; but to this the faithful servant would not agree. He said, "I cannot work for any other gentleman than you, sir ; please give me something to do ?" so Mr. Drake made Tom farm bailiff, and he held that appointment for many years. Being a careful man, he had saved his money, and he asked Mr. Drake to invest it for him. It was placed out upon a good security and remained untouched for a long time, and Winfield died a very rich man, but not more so than he deserved.

There was no family like the Drakes in Winfield's estimation ; and Tom thought the



T. TYRWHITT-DRAKE, 'ESQ., Junior.

late Mrs. T. T. Drake was the nicest lady on earth, and he was no mean judge !

It happened that a ball was taking place at Amersham, and, Tom Winfield having a great desire to see his mistress before she went into the room, asked the lady's maid if she could manage it for him, to which she readily agreed. It was accordingly arranged that Tom should go up in the evening for the purpose. Upon his arrival the maid concealed him in a cupboard, having previously taken her mistress into the secret. The lady walked past the door in order that Tom might have a peep ; then, turning, Mrs. Drake opened the door, unearthing Tom, and insisted upon taking him into the room to open the ball with her !

MR. T. T. DRAKE, JUN.

After his father's resignation Mr. T. T. Drake, jun., succeeded to the Mastership. The Bicester people could not entertain the idea of changing the name. Ben Goddard, who had whipped-in to Winfield, became huntsman. The young Squire had a very good idea of following a fox, and used to be in close attendance when hounds ran, which enabled him to bring a good many foxes to hand himself. The Squire, and his two brothers,

Messrs. Edward and George Drake, were the three hardest men and best horsemen, so related, whom it ever fell to my lot to meet with. They were all of them very nice men ; but they would turn their backs upon people and ride away from them if they did not look sharp when hounds ran, without, however, entertaining the least ill-feeling.

There were many hard men in the Bicester Hunt in those days, as, for instance, Captain Bill, Mr. William Chamberlyne, Mr. Severn, and others already mentioned. Oxford produced three very famous riders with the Bicester—Mr. Hall, a great supporter of the Heythrop Hounds ; Mr. Thompson, the banker, and “ Bill ” Holland, an innkeeper there (the Golden Cross) ; no hounds could beat them in a fair country. Mr. John Blake, a sportsman of many years’ standing, was another well-known rider.

I greatly enjoyed hunting with the young Squire, he was so bright and cheerful, with a smile on his face, a flower in his button-hole, and a good tale to tell. He was very fond of relating how he told a farmer to shoot a fox. One of his best supporters, who lived in the Vale, complained of the fox taking his lambs. The man said : “ I cannot stand this, Squire ; he has one every night,

and does not eat half of it, but buries it in the ploughed field."

The advice he received was to shoot the fox at once, not to make it known, but to bury him. Losing no time, the farmer set his man to watch that very night. He had not long to wait; over the wall came an object; the man fired, and killed—the Master's retriever!

I once had two good horses of Mr. Praed's, and met the Bicester at Chilton, and a nice ride I enjoyed in the Vale. Finding at Shearsley Gorse, the fox led us over a fine country, well supplied with water, and I have a vivid recollection of the fun there was over it. The Squire was himself hunting, and right well he did it! He killed a good stout fox in a country (near Thame) where I never hunted before nor since. We then went into the Wootton Woods and found another fox, which was soon away, and he ran a whole line of deep meadows. I had sailing orders from Mr. Praed, and carried them out by indulging my horse in a good stride for thirty minutes. The fox beat us and we retired; but, on my way home, I could feel an unpleasant bumping against my left leg, the only time I experienced that sensation with my horse. Weight-carriers, as a rule, don't like to be hurried, particularly at starting.

The week after I met the Squire at Skimmingdish Gate. All the kennel horses were down with influenza ; the Squire was riding my first mount at Chilton, and the men were riding horses found by the gentlemen of the hunt. We had some ringing about in the morning without catching a fox. We drew Stratton Coppice in the afternoon. The fox was away in a hurry pointing for Frinkford Hill, but was headed and turned over some large grass fields to the right. Jem Mason and I, sharp after them, jumped into a meadow near Stratton Mill, and the hounds checked. The Squire came over the fence directly, and, seeing us there, said, " I see how it is ! "

" Not at all, Squire," said I, " a hundred sheep have just gone through the gate, if you cast towards the water you will hit him " ; he did so with success, and we rode down to the water. " I said, " We cannot jump this at once."

" Jump in ! " said the Squire.

" Not for me," I said. " Jem had the laugh against me once ! " In went the Squire ; we followed, and the bottom was as firm as a road.

The fox set his head straight, and, without a turn, ran at least nine miles, and hounds ran into him in the Grafton country in fine style ! I wished

the Squire "good-night," and thanked him for his company so far towards home.

From the Warden Hill part the Bicester ran a good deal into the Grafton country. On one occasion, about the time I am writing of, they ran a fox straight across from one side to the other, and killed at Huntsbury Hill, but I was not out on that day. I saw many good runs, but could not properly describe them now.

The Squire once told me that he knew of a good horse which he thought he should buy, but that he was bad to mount—what did I think? "Strap his leg up," I said. "Well," he replied, "if that doesn't do I will be let down from the window!"

A runaway horse or a runaway hound he detested, and carried his dislike further. We had a mutual friend in London. One day the Squire said to me: "Our friend is married!"

"Do you know the lady?" I inquired, with interest.

"Yes," he answered, "very pretty!"

"I hope they will be happy," said I.

"Well, I don't know," said the Squire, doubtfully, "she ran away! I always think when they have done it once they will do it again." In much too short a time I met him again. Laughing, he said, "She has bolted! I told you so,

she has gone off, and I don't think that he will ever see her again!"

When Mr. Drake gave up he sold his stud at Stratton. He was succeeded by Mr. Greaves, Captain Thomson, and Lord North, successively, but neither of them retained office long. Sir Algernon Peyton then took the Bicester, and, had he been spared, would have been well supported, instead of being greatly lamented by all who knew him.

LORD VALENTIA

Then bought the pack. Stovin was huntsman, everything was well done, and there was famous sport. I had the pleasure of seeing many good days with his lordship.

One of these was over the Warden Hill country. Crossing Prior's Marston I followed his lordship over some strong timber. My horse caught it, and I fell heavily without being seriously hurt. A noble lord, who was hunting that day, would have given me £300 for my horse, but I said he was worth £50 more after that fall, and in a short time I had it! His lordship killed his fox in the afternoon in good style.

I was once out on the last day of cub-hunting at Barton Common. The sun was very warm, and there was no scent, although we found plenty

of foxes ; but I remained out, and saw a fox found late in the afternoon near Frinkford Mill ; hounds set to, and ran very hard indeed, a ringing fox, but they turned and chased her until we reached Mr. Henry Paxton's house, and there she was killed, an old vixen. Forty-five minutes, very fast, into the house.

After hunting the country for, I believe, thirteen seasons Lord Valentia retired, and was succeeded by Lord Chesham in 1884. No Master or huntsman could have been more popular than Lord Valentia and Stovin were.

LORD CHESHAM,

Who had hunted in the Bicester country for two seasons at least before taking the pack, was well known and greatly approved of as a Master, Stovin remaining as huntsman, and everything was done in the best form, keeping up the good all-round feeling and showing capital sport. After a time Stovin had very bad luck in falling heavily and receiving great injury, particularly from a summer fall. His lordship was most kind and attentive to him, procuring the best advice, which enabled him to hunt for another season, when a change was made, and Wilson took the horn in 1887.

Lord Chesham, like his predecessor, was a great hound man, and made several purchases to keep up the pack and to improve it, the last addition being several couples of the Blankney bitches, which blended well with the pack, and the benefit was of a long-lasting nature.

As I was residing in those days within reach of one side of the Bicester country, I saw a good deal of sport with the pack under both huntsmen, my lord himself carrying the horn occasionally with success. Although I remember many good runs, I cannot give a sufficiently correct report to enable me to write them. On one occasion I saw the bitch pack find a fox at Cockley Brake and run over the grass nearly to Brackley Gorse, turn left-handed up Steane Park at a tremendous pace. On leaving the park and running on the other side of Banbury Road, Captain Hannay, a very hard man, had a fall over a strong fence. The horse fell, and the Captain pitched over his head with both feet hung in the stirrups; fortunately there was sufficient help near or the accident might have been serious.

The pack raced on, leaving Hinton-in-the-Hedges to the left, bearing up to Farthinghoe on the right, and they raced together like a flock of pigeons, and killed the fox near Astrop. That

pack reminded me of Lord Southampton's pack of bitches which I used to like so much.

After hunting the country so successfully, and keeping the hounds up to perfection, Lord Chesham resigned, and was succeeded by Mr. Colville Smith. The prices obtained for the stud proved clearly how well the thing had been carried on. It has remained an unsettled point which of the three Masters was the most popular—Lord Valentia, Lord Chesham, or the much-beloved Sir Algernon Peyton. Wilson was a great success as huntsman, and, as far as my knowledge carried me, his condition, and his manner of hunting his foxes by accounting for them so well, were worthy of high commendation, and it is certain that the present Bicester huntsman, Will Cox, may look back to Wilson, as Frank Beers did to his father, and be very thankful that he had such an instructor; and also such a clever man as Lord Chesham to form a pack of hounds for his master in his youth.

Having had the pleasure of visiting the Bicester country for fifty seasons, I have had some insight into the happy manner in which the whole thing has been conducted. Many of the proprietors were good sportsmen, such as Sir Algernon Peyton and Mr. Harrison. Mr. Tubb, the worthy

secretary, has done good service for the hunt, and his efforts are greatly appreciated.

Lord Lawrence, Major Green, Mr. Dewar, and Colonel Williamson hunted for many seasons with the Bicester, and rode well.

THE EARL OF JERSEY.

A name greatly revered for generations is that of Lord Jersey, and the bearers of it were famous as good landlords, and also as capital riders.

No pen of mine can do justice to the present lord. I once heard an American say that 'he had licked all Varginie!' and, extending his arm, he exclaimed, "Cast iron! pillar of marble! double-jointed all the way through! my father licked all Varginie, and I licked my father!!" And so it is that, good as all the Jerseys have been, the present earl beats them all, and I hope he may live long to be the "pillar of marble" he is to the Bicester Hunt! and it is very satisfactory to hear that Lord Villiers is carrying on the riding qualification of the family.

The farmers do not stand in need of praise; with Mr. Edward Paxton as leader, Messrs. Waters, Owen Clarke, Harper, Nichols, Lepper, Busby, Tomes, Barge, Warr, Hinton, Godwin, Rogers, Sanders, Terrys, Roper, Lester, John



“JONATHAN.”

One of Dick Painter's Flyers; ridden by Frank Beers when
whipper-in.

Treadwell, Flowers, Dickens, King, Mansfields, and many others there is a strong sporting contingent. The Bicester country is one of the best, if not the best, in England, such good farmers abound all over it; they set their faces against wire, and it is believed to be the fact that the country does not suffer from the presence of that cruel invention.

DICK PAINTER.

This worthy was a well-known dealer in horses who lived at Bicester. In the exercise of his calling he gained a large circle of friends, and earned an honest living. Dick was the youngest of a family of four girls and four boys, who were left orphans while still young; and the girls, being all older than their brothers, worked hard and brought them up.

They were plodding, steady boys, but none of them showed any aptitude for business except the youngest; and two good gentlemen in Bicester, forming a satisfactory opinion of his capabilities, financed Richard, as they always called him, and enabled him to go into Wales to buy horses. From a small beginning Dick, by degrees, formed a fine connection for buying, and dealt very largely.

Being very straightforward in all his dealings, and a very amusing man besides, he enjoyed the patronage of most of the Bicester gentlemen.

Dick's education did not amount to much, but he was full of tact and common-sense, and possessed a vocabulary all his own. He was, as before remarked, most amusing. He had a brother called Jack who assisted him in his business, being a good rider, but was not allowed to do business alone; and if anyone called in Dick's absence something of this sort would take place. The customer would inquire, "What horse is this, Jack?" to which Jack, unwilling to risk the smallest show of independence, would reply, "Don't know, ne'er 'eared our Dick say!" One day a friend of mine led Jack on with questions, and amongst other things, asked him, "Had any wet up here lately?" "Dunno," answered Jack, doggedly, "ne'er 'eared our Dick say!"

Making a further effort to elicit information, the questioner said, "Where is the nice bay horse I saw here the other day?"

"Oh! our Dick solded 'im."

"Oh, indeed; where is he gone?" pursued the enquirer.

"I dunno," said Jack, "a little way up the country, t'other side Italy!"

When I paid my first visit to Dick Painter, and stated my wants, he said, " You want a gallopin' 'oss, I have one ! " The hunter was led out and I mounted him. " There," said Dick, " you be on a 'oss now, he can gallop as fast as you can clap your hands, and jump like a flea ! "

A gentleman who wanted a horse called at Dick's stables, and stated his requirements in terms which indicated perfection. Dick listened in silence as the customer enumerated the requisite points, and then expressed his inability to supply the demand thus : " Ah ! I know just what you want, sir, you want a H'Angel, and I don't deal in 'em ! "

Dick was a great favourite with Colonel Thomas, who was at that time Master of the Horse to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales ; and the Colonel at one time pressed Dick to take some horses to the Windsor stables for His Royal Highness' inspection, and wrote a kind letter about quarters, and so forth. Dick wrote in reply : " I'm much obliged, but I think I won't ! "

I myself dealt with Painter for many years, and always without the slightest misunderstanding ; good animals of all kinds were obtained from Bicester.

Mr. Charles Praed had a stud of ten weight-carriers, all of which were bought from Painter,

and were considered to be second to none in those days. Mr. Henry Lambton much liked the horses which he obtained from Dick out of South Wales and Shropshire. Colonel Gipps, also a hard man, bought many horses of Dick, who always called him "Mr. Colonel Gipps."

On one occasion Dick showed me what he called "A funny 'oss," and of which he said, "He can go as far in an hour as will take him all day to come back!"

"What are you going to do with him?" I laughingly asked.

"I'm beggared if I knows!" was the characteristic reply.

Dick would persist in saying "Indigestion," which very much disturbed his two patrons before-mentioned, who used very frequently to walk down to see Dick after breakfast. On one such occasion another brother of Dick's, named George, who worked for him, was passing with a server of oats. One of the visitors took a handful of them, and, calling Dick's attention, asked him which horse they were for; and, on hearing, he said: "If you put some chaff into them he will *di*-gest them better."

"I hope to goodness he won't," cried Dick, "he cost eighty guineas!" The gentleman,

turning to his brother, said that he must give Dick up as incorrigible.

In his latter days Dick became very ill, and sent for Dr. Symonds from Oxford. When he came Dick said to him : " Doctor, I have a bit of money and no one my very near kin ; if you will undertake my case and attend to me, you may as well have some of it as any one else." The doctor took the hint and did his best, and pleased Dick's friends very much by relieving him, thereby prolonging his life. The gentlemen from the club used to go down every evening, after hunting, before they dressed for dinner, to tell Dick the events of the day.

All the family lived to a great age, except Jack, who was the only one who married. Dick said he married a woman who kept an inn, and Jack got too near the barrel !

I have bought horses from all parts of England and Ireland, but none better than those purchased from Painter, which came out of South Wales, Herefordshire, and Shropshire. The softest horse I ever bought in my life I obtained from Ireland, where he had been the property of a priest ; and although, in deference to his late owner, I named him His Reverence, he was a cur !

Painter bought a horse of a Doctor of Divinity, which was of very high breeding and good qualities, and had won many prizes as a colt, in consequence of which the doctor was beset with would-be purchasers ; and he therefore decided to sell the horse to Painter, who promised him to me.

This doctor was very sensitive and very sagacious. In his early life he lived under a nobleman and was treated most kindly by his patron. In course of time the nobleman died and his son succeeded him ; and he, whether from accident or intention is not known, took no notice of the reverend gentleman, who keenly felt this neglect.

One Sunday the doctor took for his text the words : " There arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph " ; and, after having expatiated on the unkindness of people who forget their old friends, he concluded his sermon, which, however, made no impression upon the young nobleman. Later on in the autumn the young nobleman went out shooting, and, by accident, stuck a shot into a labouring man. The following Sunday the doctor who, of course, had heard of the accident, took for his text the words : " A certain man drew a bow at a venture," and read a strong lecture upon such carelessness.

The nobleman at once said he would give him a much better living in order to be rid of him!

Having at length brought my book to a conclusion, I must crave the indulgence of my readers, and beg them to take into consideration the fact that I was never entered for, nor intended to be, an author; and I must apologise for the liberty I have taken in placing such a production before the public.

It really ought to have been a good book had it been handled with more talent. One thing may be said in its favour, namely, that it is for the most part a statement of facts, the bulk of which were witnessed by the Author, and the remainder can be vouched for.

It is fair to assume that the period of fifty years treated of in this book will compare favourably with any similar period in the history of fox-hunting; and certainly men are mentioned who are or were as good as England ever produced.

As it did not seem possible for me to relate all my experiences in one book, so a great many good men whom I have met are not named, and much more might easily have been written of those who have been named; but I have endeavoured not to "dwell on the line" and become prosy.

The title of my book confined me to fox-hunting, or I should have enjoyed relating the good sport I have seen in the Vale with the stag-hounds, where everything has been so well conducted for so many years by the de Rothschild family. I have always thought that the stag makes, as a rule, better lines than the fox, one reason being that you can place the deer in the best part of the Vale, when he is bound to take a good line; and another is that the stag is hunted by a wonderful pack of hounds.

I cannot close this book without expressing great thankfulness for the number of years allotted to me, with health and strength, to enjoy fox-hunting; and I hope my readers will join me in wishing success to the noble sport, which has been well termed "The Sport of Kings."

THE END.

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